

FRONTISPIECE



EXPLANATION

TRUTH presenting the **HOLY BIBLE** to **PIETY**, who is supported on one side by **HOPE**, on the other by **FAITH**, the latter of whom is trampling *Sin* beneath her Feet. In the back Ground a distant View of our **FIRST PARENTS** in their state of **INNOCENCE**.

A NEW AND COMPLETE
UNIVERSAL HISTORY
 OF THE
HOLY BIBLE,
 INCLUDING THE
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT;
 AND COMPRISING
 All the TRANSACTIONS recorded in the SACRED WRITINGS,
 FROM THE
CREATION OF THE WORLD,
 TO THE
Full Establishment of Christianity.

IN WHICH

The several Parts of Scripture are pleasingly related, and satisfactorily illustrated; Obscure Passages rendered clear; Seeming Inconsistencies reconciled; the various Significations of the most expressive Appellatives elucidated; False Translations amended; Former Errors corrected; and Difficult Texts made clear to every Capacity.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

An ample and comprehensive DISPLAY of the CONNECTION between the
 SACRED WRITERS and PROFANE AUTHORS: Also
 Particular Accounts of the LIVES and TRANSACTIONS of the most eminent PATRIARCHS,
 PROPHETS, and other Servants of GOD, who, by an inspired Grace, have distinguished
 themselves in the Display of Divine Wisdom.

ILLUSTRATED WITH NOTES

Historical
 Theological
 Civil
 Commercial
 Geographical

Literal
 Critical
 Natural
 Military
 Political

Systematical
 Chronological
 Argumentative
 Philological
 Explanatory

Reconciliatory
 Biographical
 Practical
 AND
 Moral

The Whole calculated to enlighten the Understanding, purify the Heart, and promote the Knowledge of those SACRED SCRIPTURES, by which we may obtain Happiness here, and eternal Salvation hereafter.

By the Reverend EDWARD KIMPTON,
 Vicar of ROGATE in *Sussex*, Morning Preacher of *St. Matthew's, Bethnal-Green*, and late of
 CHRIST'S COLLEGE, *Cambridge*;
 Assisted by many learned GENTLEMEN, who have made the Sacred Writings their peculiar Study.

Embellished with a great Number of beautiful COPPER-PLATES, descriptive of the most distinguished Transactions related in the SACRED WRITINGS; From Original Drawings of the ingenious Messrs. METZ, STOTHARD and SAUNDERS, Members of the Royal Academy; and other eminent Artists. The Whole engraved by the most Capital Performers, particularly GRIGNION, COLLIER, HEATH, COOK, BLAKE, WHITE, TAYLOR, &c.

*The HISTORY of the HOLY BIBLE view:
 Shewn in a Light conspicuous, pleasing, new;
 All that is difficult is here made plain,
 Instruct and charm, inform and entertain.
 Eternal Bliss thro' pleasing Pages trace,
 And seek Salvation in the Paths of Grace.*

L O N D O N:
 Printed for J. COOKE, No. 17, PATER-NOSTER ROW.

P R E F A C E.

IT is the general Intent of Books to apply to the Heart, or Imagination; to touch the Passions, or please the Fancy; but the HOLY BIBLE addresses the Soul, gives Joy, Peace and Comfort here, and a delightful Prospect hereafter.

A New and Complete Universal History of the Holy Bible has long been wanting: We have with great Care, Expence and Study, together with the Assistance of some of the most learned Divines, been enabled to present one to the Public. In this Work we have blended Instruction and Entertainment in such a Manner, that whilst the Reader is sensibly pleased, he will find himself imperceptibly improved, and be amazed at his extensive Knowledge of the Scriptures acquired in so rapid a Manner.

A History of the Bible is absolutely necessary to accompany that Sacred Book, in order to elucidate several important Matters, which, in this Age, might not be understood by many pious and well disposed people. The Sacred Writers often named Places which they did not describe, because those to whom their Writings were addressed well knew them. It is our Business, therefore, to point out the Situation, together with the antient and modern State of those Places. They mentioned Customs peculiar to the early Ages and Oriental Countries in which they lived, and at this modern Time require Explanations, and which we have illustrated with infinite Care and Pains. Exclusive of these Duties, we have found it necessary to reconcile seeming Inconsistencies; clear obscure Passages; correct false Translations; remove Errors of all Kinds, and give Religion the Smiles of Heavenly Benignity.

In our Labours may be viewed, with awful Surprise, the Great and Glorious Work of the Creation: and with pleasing Admiration may be seen the rise and fall of Empires; the Revolutions of Kingdoms and States; the various Vicissitudes of Life in all Stations; the Depravity of Human Nature when Man is forsaken by God; the easy Transitions from Innocence to Guilt and from Virtue to Vice; the Policy of Courts, and Simplicity of Cottages; the Rage of Lust; Folly of Pride; Fate of Tyranny, and Madness of Ambition. Here will be found Patterns for Kings and Princes; Governors and Generals; Magistrates and Ministers, and for all who intend to practise the Christian or Moral Virtues. Hence St. Gregory says, From the Patriarchs we may take the Model of all Virtues: Abel teaches us Innocence; Enoch Purity of Heart; Noah a firm Perseverance in Righteousness; Abraham the Perfection of Purity; Joseph Chastity; Jacob Constancy in Labour; Moses Meekness; and Job invincible Patience.

Salvation, the most glorious Prize that Man can obtain, may be here pursued with Pleasure, and acquired with Ease, if Piety is the Guide and Faith the Intercessor. The Mercy of God is greater than our Delinquency, and eternal Happiness is in our Reach if we suppress the Gratification of our Passions to seek it. Read and be informed; look for and find.

Charm us ye Sacred Leaves with nobler Themes,
With op'ning Heavens and Angels rob'd in Flames;
Ye restless Passions, while we read, be aw'd:
Hail ye mysterious Oracles of God.
Here we behold how infant Time began;
How the Dust mov'd, and quicken'd into Man;
Here thro' the flow'ry Walks of Eden rove,
Court the soft Breeze, or range the spicy Grove;
There tread on hallow'd Ground, where Angels trod;
And rev'rend Patriarchs talk'd as Friends with God:
Or hear the Voice to slumb'ring Prophets giv'n,
Or gaze on Visions from the Throne of Heav'n.

The

The Human Mind requires Relaxation from every Labour: Reading is the most rational and inoffensive Method of employing vacant Time. We gain Knowledge, while we obtain Pleasure; and no one ever rose from reading a good Author, without being either wiser or better.

The Works of the Primitive Fathers of the Church have been of singular Use in elucidating the Holy Scriptures. They lived immediately after the Time of the Apostles and Evangelists, and have handed to us many important Facts that have thrown a great Light upon the Sacred Writings: They gave a firm Foundation for forming a History of THE BIBLE, which successive Ages have amazingly improved. To them we owe the Circulation of Christianity in the earliest Ages, as they propagated the Gospel Tenets with Zeal, and impressed their divine Truths with Energy. Hence St. Austin says to his Auditors, concerning the Christian Preachers of his Days, "When we converse with you at other Times (meaning in private Conversation) we rather bear with you than instruct you, but when we are in this Holy Place, and expound to you the Books of God, in case the Truths we propound to you seem too rigid, the Necessity which lies upon us of expounding the Scripture, will plead our Excuse for the Liberty with which we represent what God himself speaks to you. If the Word of God astonishes you, so it does us: We are as apprehensive of its Threats as you, and while we speak those Things which make you tremble, we are affected in the very same Manner."

This Work is formed upon an entire new Plan, and rendered exactly consonant to the natural Partitions of Scripture. The whole is illustrated and explained by such curious and interesting Notes, as will form an inexhaustible Fund of Literary Entertainment; ample will be the Instructions of the History, and amusing the Elucidations.

CHRISTIAN READER!

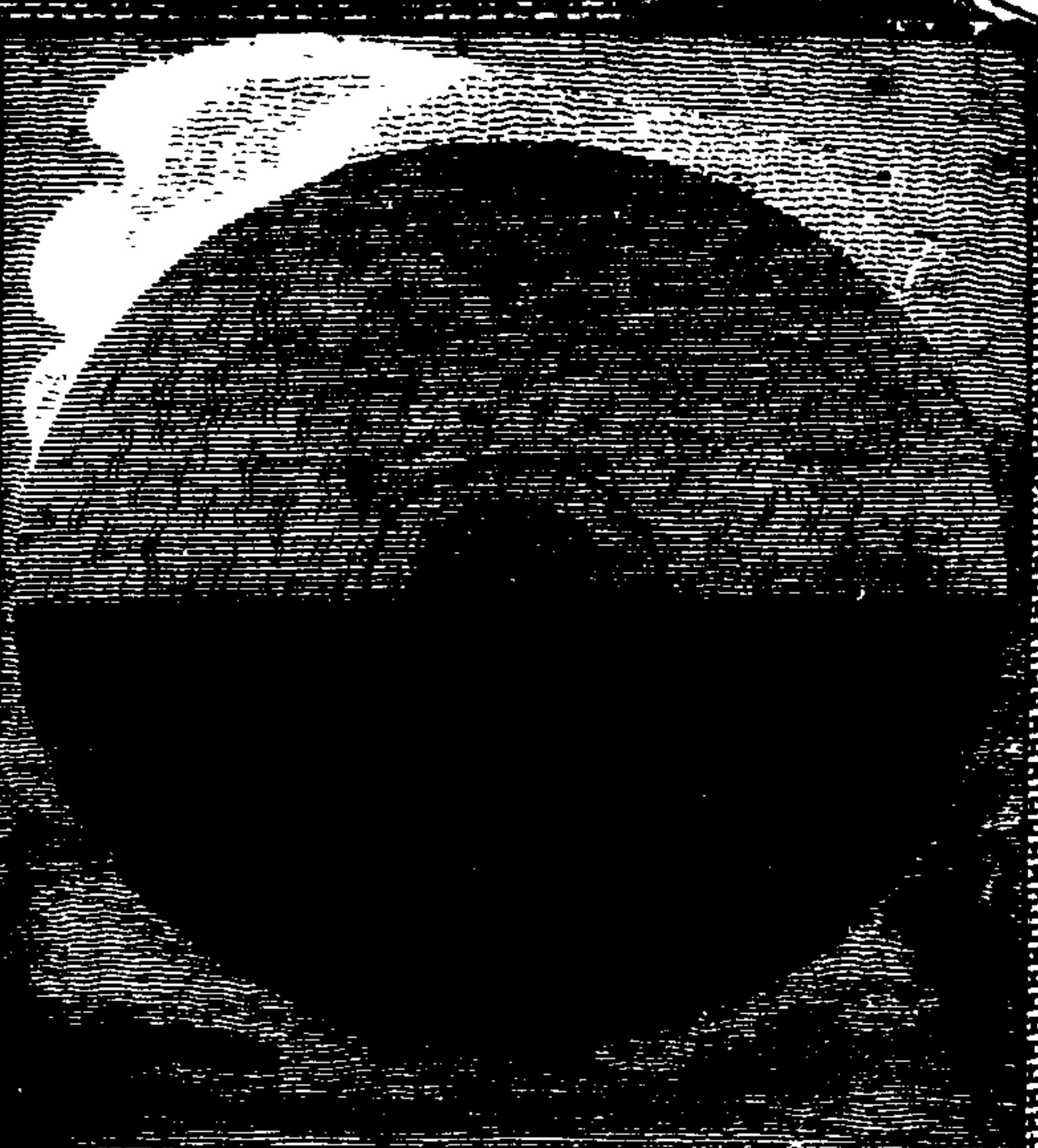
Let me intreat of you seriously to reflect on the shortness and uncertainty of this transitory Life, and try, ere it be too late, to secure eternal Felicity. You have an immortal Soul, save it, therefore, from perishing; and as it is your Interest, let it be your Inclination, to procure it endless Bliss. Religion points the Path, follow it, and let not the Allurements of a delusive World draw you aside:

For, let the Witling argue all he can,
It is *Religion still which makes the Man*:
'Tis this, my Friend, which streaks thy Mornings bright;
'Tis this which gilds the Horrors of the Night.
When Wealth forsakes us, and when Friends are few;
When Friends are faithless, or when Foes pursue,
'Tis this which wards the Blow, or stills the Smart,
Disarms Affliction, or repels its Dart;
Within the Breast bids present Raptures rise,
Bids awful Conscience spread her cloudless Skies.
When the Storm thickens and the Thunders roll,
When the Earth trembles to th'affrighted Pole,
The virtuous Mind nor fears nor doubts assail,
For Storms are Zephyrs, or a gentler Gale.
But when Disease obstructs the lab'ring Breath,
When the Pulse thickens, and each Gasp is Death,
Ev'n then Religion shall sustain the Just,
Grace their last Moments, nor desert their Dust.

5 DE 30

EDWARD KIMPTON.

The
Six Days Work
of the
Creation.



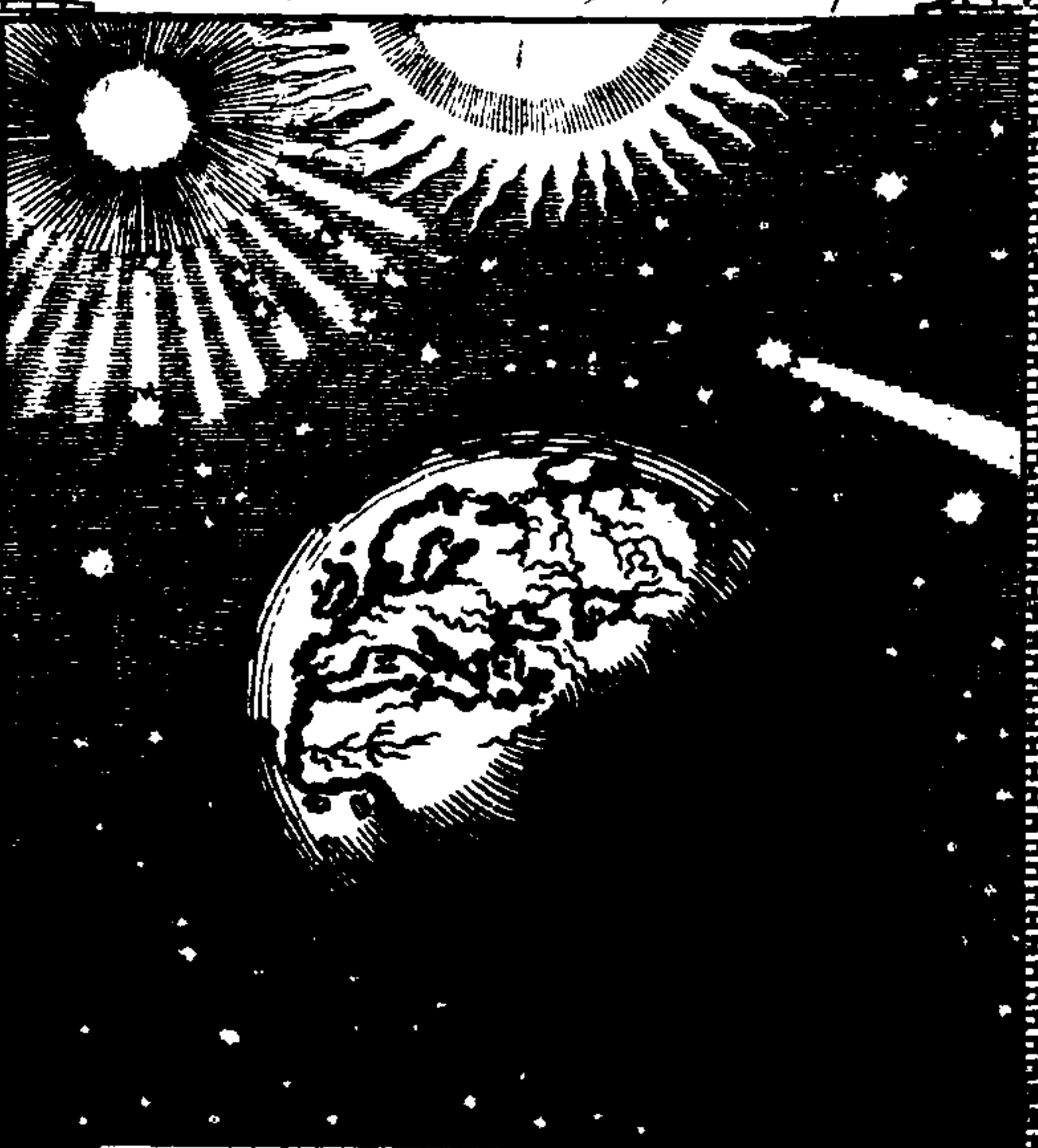
1 Light divided from Darkness.



2 The Firmament is made.



3 Separation of the Earth from the Waters.



4 The Creation of the Sun, Moon & Stars.



5 The Creation of Birds & Fishes.



6 The Creation of Man.

A NEW AND COMPLETE
UNIVERSAL HISTORY
OF THE
HOLY BIBLE.

PART I.
Containing the HISTORY of the OLD TESTAMENT.

BOOK I.
From the CREATION to the DEATH of MOSES,
[Including a Period of 2553 Years.]

CHAP. I.
*The Creation of the World. The State of Man's Innocence. The Fall of our First Parents,
and their Expulsion from Paradise.*

THE first transaction with which we are presented by history, is the most awful and glorious that imagination can conceive, namely, THE CREATION OF THE WORLD. Stupendous work! and worthy the amazing power of that supreme Being by whom it was executed. The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and vivified them. He said, "Let there be Light, and there was light*! and God saw the light that it was good, and he divided the light from the darkness, calling the light day, and the darkness night; and the evening and the morning were the first day." Surprizing display of Omnipotence, to illuminate a whole system in so short a time, and appoint the proper portions of light and darkness to every part of the universe!

The waters being still dispersed over the face of chaos, the Almighty was pleased to separate them from each other, and restrain their currents within proper bounds. He divided

those above the firmament from those beneath, and parted the waters of the earth from the watery atmospheres. The firmament † formed on this occasion was called Heaven, and, with the separation of the waters, completed the second day of the creation.

Light being formed, and the waters separated from each other, the Almighty, on the third day, commanded that the waters beneath the firmament should be gathered together, and dry land appear. The waters accordingly fled into deep vallies and recesses of the earth, the lofty mountains raised their towering heads, and the lesser hills displayed their pleasing summits. As the great Creator designed the earth for the future habitation of man and beast, it was no sooner separated from the waters than he gave it a prolific virtue, and endowed it with the power of vegetation. The surface was immediately covered with grass for cattle, which was succeeded by herbs, plants, and fruit trees, proper for the nourishment of man. All those

* With respect to the expression, *And God said, Let there be Light, and there was light*, Longinus, that great judge of the beautiful and sublime, says, "It is the most noble and lofty example of sublimity that imagination can conceive: it commands things into existence, speaks with the voice of supernatural authority, and is the language of God."

† The Hebrew word which we translate *firmament*, signifies a curtain, or any thing stretched out and extended. The term is not only applied to the sky, but to the atmosphere, and in this place seems particularly to refer to that extent of airy matter which encompasses the earth, and separates the clouds from the waters on the earth.

those were instantly in a state of perfection, that they might be ready for the use of those inhabitants for whom they were designed*.

The Almighty Creator, having prepared such necessities as he thought proper on earth, for the use of its intended inhabitants, on the fourth day formed those two great luminaries of heaven called the Sun and Moon! the former of which he appointed to rule the day, and the latter the night. He likewise formed the planets, fixed their gravitation and vicissitudes, and appointed their regular courses, that they might divide time and distinguish the seasons. By means of these luminaries the atmosphere was rarified, and, by their influence on the planets, was promoted the office of vegetation.

The creation of the first four days consisting of things inanimate, on the fifth God pronounced his omnipotent fiat, for the production of living creatures, saying, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl† that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." He was pleased to form these creatures of different shapes and sizes; some very large‡, to shew the wonder of his creating power, and others exceeding small, to display the goodness of his indulgent providence. After he had created them, he gave them his blessing, by bidding them, *be fruitful and multiply*; enduing them, at the same time, with a power to propagate, in a prolific manner, their respective species. And thus were completed the works of the fifth day.

In the beginning of the sixth day God created the terrestrial animals, which the sacred historian has divided into three classes; namely,

1. Beasts, or wild creatures, such as lions, tigers, bears, wolves, &c.
2. Cattle, or domestic animals, for the use of men, such as bulls and cows, sheep, hogs, horses, asses, &c.
3. Creeping things, such as serpents, worms, and various kinds of insects.

* Though the first fruits of the earth were all produced without any seeds, by the bare command of God, yet, to perpetuate the same, each kind contained its own seed, which being sown in the earth, or falling, when ripe, from the plants themselves, should continue in succession to the end of the world.

† From this expression, some are of opinion, that fowls derive their origin from the water as well as the fishes; while others, with equal reason, suppose them to have been made out of the earth, agreeable to the following passage in Gen. ii. 19. "Out of the ground God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air." But these two texts are easily reconciled, when we consider, that neither denies what the other asserts. It is to be observed, that some fowls live mostly in the water, others partly on land, and partly on water, while a third sort live altogether on land. This diversity countenances the opinion of many of the antients, that they were made partly out of the water, or of both mixed together.

‡ The words in the text are, *And God created great whales*. But this expression must not be confined to the whale alone: it undoubtedly implies, fish of an enormous size, of which there are various species, that differ both in their form and magnitude.

§ What a noble and majestic expression was this, and how consistent with the nature of that Almighty Being by whom it was spoken! In the formation of other creatures, God says, let the earth or the waters bring them forth;

The omnipotent Creator having made these abundant preparations, crowned his work with the formation of the grand object MAN, for whose use they were designed. He said, *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness* §. And, to shew that the creature he was now about to form should be the master-piece of the creation, and (under his auspices) have supremacy over the whole, he farther says, *and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth*. In the formation of man's body, God made choice of the dust of the earth, after which, having infused into him an immortal spirit, or, as the text says, *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, he became a living soul* ||.

As soon as Adam began to feel a sense of his existence, (having been by his great Creator invested with knowledge as well as power) he was greatly alarmed at the animals that he saw surround him; but the Almighty, to ease his mind, assured him, that all the creatures on the earth should be subject to his authority, and to convince him of the great power with which he had invested him, appointed them to appear before him. This was accordingly done, upon which, as they passed, Adam readily gave them such appellations as distinguished their species, and were suitable to their natures ¶.

Adam greatly admired the animals to whom he had given names; but, when he saw them all in couples, he was concerned that he alone was without a companion, whose society might contribute to his happiness. The Almighty, knowing his anxiety, threw him into a sound sleep, during which he took away one of his ribs, and, after closing up the orifice, formed it into the body of a woman **, gave her breath, and, like Adam, she became a living soul.

This was certainly the last act †† of the whole creation, which, by the almighty power of God, was made perfect in the space of six days; at the

but here (as if man was to be made only a little lower than the angels) he says, *let us make him in our image*, that is, let us make him like ourself; let us endue him with all those noble faculties that will raise him above the animal creation, and make him not only to bear our image in the lower world, but, also qualify him for the enjoyment of those blessings that are to be found at our right hand, to the full extent of eternity.

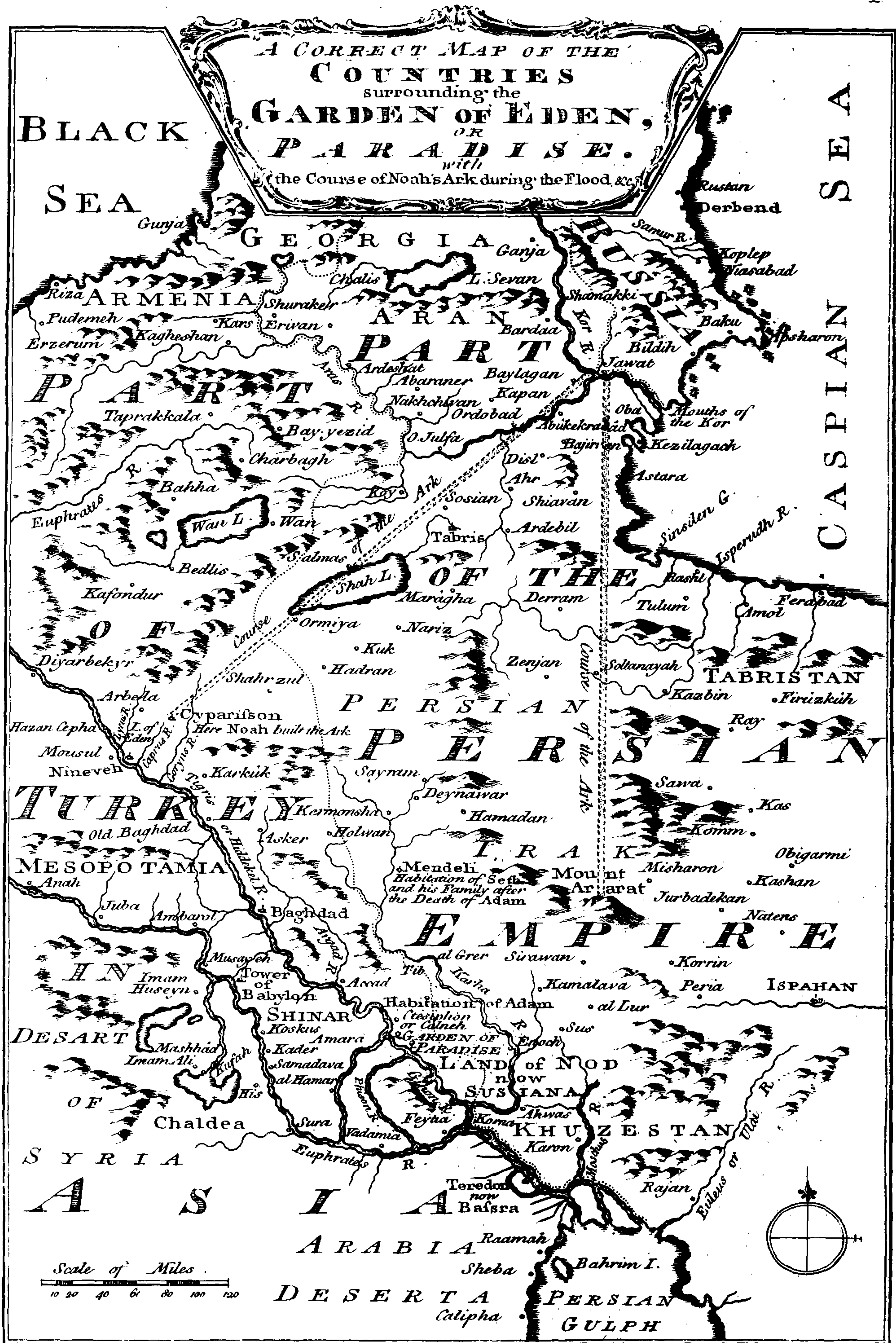
|| Josephus says, that after God had created man, he called him Adam, which, in the Hebrew, signifies *red*, from the earth, with which he was made being of that colour.

¶ The great poet, Milton, on this occasion, expresses himself as follows:

As thus he spake, each bird, and beast, behold
Approaching, two and two; these cowering low
With blandishment; each bird stoop'd on his wing.
I nam'd them, as they pass'd, and understood
Their nature, with such knowledge God endued
My sudden apprehension!

** The general name for woman, in the Hebrew language, is *Isa*; but this woman, being the first, was (after the fall) called *Eve*, which signifies *the mother of human kind*.

†† Though the sacred historian does not, in a particular manner, mention the formation of Eve till some time after that



Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



ADAM *and* EVE *in* PARADISE

the close of which the great Creator took a survey of the whole, and pronounced it *good*; or properly adapted to the uses for which it was intended. The next day (which was the seventh from the beginning of the creation *) God set apart as a time of solemn rest from his labours. He blessed and sanctified it; and, to impress mankind with a just sense of his infinite wisdom, power and goodness, ordered † it ever after to be kept sacred. ‡

When Adam first beheld the fair partner of his life, who was presented to him by her Almighty Creator, he was struck with a secret-sympathy, and finding her of his own likeness and complexion, he exclaimed with rapture §, *This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh*. He easily foresaw that the love and union which was now to take place between them was to be last-

that of Adam, yet it is not in the least to be doubted but they were both created on the same day. This, indeed, evidently appears from the relation of the works of the sixth day, Gen. ii. 27. where, after the words, *God created man in his own image, are added, male and female created he them*.

* It is not directly ascertained at what time or season of the year the world was made; but, from the trees being laden with fruit (of which history informs us our first parents did eat) it is most reasonable to suppose that it was at or near the autumnal equinox.

† Thus was the seventh day appointed by God, from the very beginning of the world, to be observed as a day of rest by mankind, in memory of the great benefits received in the formation of the universe. It has been a question, among the learned, whether any sabbath was observed before the promulgation of the law by Moses; but the most judicious commentators agree, that Adam and Eve constantly observed the seventh day, and dedicated it, in a peculiar manner, to the service of the Almighty; and that the first sabbath, which Philo (one of the most antient writers) calls *the birth-day of the world*, was celebrated in Paradise itself: which pious custom, being transmitted from our first parents to their posterity, became, in time, so general, that the same Philo calls it, *the universal festival of mankind*.

‡ The Creation of the World, which is certainly the most important event that man can reflect on, is more consistently related by the writers of different ages, nations and religions, than most other transactions. The account of it by Moses is delivered in the language of inspiration, and contains that sublime energy which could only be dictated by the Spirit of God. Josephus nearly transcribes it, and the English poet Milton has transfused it into our language with great elegance. Other poetical descriptions of it have been given since his time; among which the most concise and picturesque is the following:

The earth with universal darkness veil'd,
In rude chaotic matter lay conceal'd,
In one vast lump together crush'd and bruis'd,
Shapeless and void, and without form confus'd;
Till God's all-wise command,—“Let there be light”
Dispell'd the gloom of everlasting night.
Darkness soon fled, and heav'n's Supreme decreed,—
“Let day and night alternately succeed.”
This done, he next employ'd his guardian-care
To make the concave firmament appear.
He spoke the word,—the sea from land divides,
And in its proper channel swiftly glides.
Herbs, grass and flow'rs, adorn the beauteous fields,
The blooming rose a fragrant odour yields,
The variegated daisie paints the ground,
Each spot with curious workmanship is crown'd:
Here humble shrubs in ample order rise,
There lofty pines and cedars touch the skies;
Here sweet perfumes from breathing herbs ascend,
There trees of fruit beneath their burdens bend.
Two glorious planets eminently bright,
(One rules the day, the other rules the night)
Were made by that eternal hand of God,
Who shakes all nature with his awful nod;
Besides the smaller orbs, the stars that rise,
When evening comes, and decorate the skies.

ing. The divine hand which conducted the woman to Adam did it in the light of a matrimonial father; and having joined them together, he pronounced this benediction, *Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth*; intimating, that as he had given them dominion over every part of the creation, they, by being themselves fruitful in the procreation of children, might live to see the earth replenished with a numerous progeny.

To facilitate the intended happiness of our first parents, the Almighty Creator had provided for their residence a most delightful spot called Eden, ‖ which was watered by an extensive river divided into four streams. ¶ It was furnished with all kinds of vegetables, among which were two remarkable trees, one called the *Tree of Life* **, and the other, *The Tree of Knowledge* ††; by the latter of

Next he enjoin'd this positive command,
“Produce ye ~~waters~~ fish, and fowl you land.”
No sooner said, than in the briny sea
The sportive fishes gladly frisk and play.
Each warbling chorister extends its wings,
Glides thro' the yielding air, and sweetly sings.
Lo! beasts of diff'rent shape and diff'rent kind,
And creeping things abundant pasture find:
Both fish, and fowl, and beasts his power obey,
Leap into form, and own his potent sway.
God next created man, the chief of all,
The noblest, greatest work, the principal;
Man the sixth day this wond'rous fabrick crown'd,
Made to preserve the fruits, and till the ground:
Each beast he nam'd, that wander'd o'er the plain,
Each fish that sported in the wat'ry main,
Each fowl, that thro' the liquid æther flew,
Each plant, that in fair Eden's garden grew,
Each lofty tree that reach'd the vaulted sky,
Each flow'r of diff'rent form, and diff'rent dye.
Each creeping animal the earth sustain'd,
And what besides in *Paradise* remain'd.
Th' Almighty then his glorious works survey'd,
Beheld each thing in proper order laid,
And crown'd the whole with this his last command—
“Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the land.”

§ The joy and transport of Adam, on his first sight of Eve, is thus beautifully expressed by Milton:

On she came;
Led by her heav'nly maker (tho' unseen)
And guided by his voice; not uninform'd
Of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites.
Grace was in all her steps, heav'n in her eye,
In ev'ry gesture dignity and love.
I, overjoy'd, could not forbear aloud:
“This turn hath made amends: thou hast fulfill'd
“Thy words, Creator bounteous, and benign!
“Giver of all things fair! but fairest this
“Of all thy gifts!”

‖ It is the general opinion of divines and philosophers, that this blissful spot was situated near Mesopotamia, and not far from Judea.

¶ One of these streams (called in the text Phison, and, by the Greeks, Ganges) meanders into India, and disembogues itself into the ocean. The second, called the Euphrates, empties itself into the Persian Sea; as does likewise the Tigris (called in scripture Hiddekel.) And the fourth, named Gihon, and by the Greeks, the Nile, connects itself with the other three.

** This tree is supposed to have been so called, from its having in it a virtue not only to repair the animal spirits, as other nourishment does, but likewise to preserve and maintain them in the same equal temper and state, wherein they were created; that is to say, without affecting the party who used it with pain, disease and decay.

†† There are various opinions concerning the nature and properties of the *Tree of Knowledge*, which was forbidden to our first parents. Some think it had a baneful quality, directly opposite to that of the *Tree of Life*, while others imagine it is thus called by the sacred historian, because, directly

of which *Good* and *Evil* were to be distinguished. Into this earthly paradise did the Almighty conduct Adam and Eve, giving them orders to take care of the garden, and superintend the plants. He granted them permission to eat of the fruit of every tree, except that of the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*. This he strictly charged them not even to touch, on the penalty of incurring his displeasure, and thereby entailing upon themselves and their descendants, mortality, diseases, and death. With this small restraint God left them in the garden of Eden, where every thing was pleasing to the sight, and accommodated to their mutual enjoyment.

Thus fixed in the most beautiful situation, possessed of innocence, devoid of guilt, and free from care, the happiness of our first parents appeared complete :

Perfection crown'd with wond'rous frame,
And peace and plenty smil'd around :
They felt no grief, they knew no shame,
But tasted heaven, on earthly ground.

But, alas ! their bliss was transient, their innocence fleeting, and their exemption from care very short.

All animals at this time were social in their tempers, except the serpent,* who was equally subtle and envious. This malignant creature viewing the felicity of the first pair with those painful sensations which are natural to depravity of heart, determined to allure them from their innocence, and stimulate them to the crime of disobedience. In consequence of this infernal design, he began by persuading Eve to taste the prohibited Tree of Knowledge, telling her,† that by so doing, both herself and her husband would immediately be sensible of the difference between Good and Evil, acquire much additional happiness, and even not be inferior, in point of wisdom, to God himself.

Unhappily the artifices of the serpent prevailed. Eve gazed on the tempting fruit till her appetite was inflamed ; its beautiful hue made her fancy it a most delicious food ; and she at length sacrificed her duty to gratify her curiosity. She stretched forth her presumptuous hand, took of the baneful fruit, and eat her own destruction.

————— She pluck'd, she eat ;
Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat,
Sighing thro' all her works, gave sign of woe
That all was lost.

Pleased with the taste of the fruit, and fancy-

directly after Adam and Eve had eaten of it, they became sensible of the Good they had lost, and the Evil they had incurred, by their disobedience.

* It is generally thought that this was the work of Satan, who, to effect his purposes, assumed the figure of a serpent.

† It may appear strange to some, that the serpent should be here represented as having the power of speech, and that Eve, on that account, should not have been greatly alarmed. Josephus, and some others, alledge, that all animals were endued with speech and reason before the fall. But other interpreters more plausibly observe, that the meaning here must be, that the serpent, by his actions, conceived the same ideas to the mind of Eve, as words of the same import would have done. For example, she seeing the serpent eat

ing herself already in possession of that additional happiness the serpent had promised her, she flew to Adam, and enticed him to participate in her crime.

————— He scrupled not to eat
Against his better knowledge—
Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan :
Sky lower'd, and muttering thunder, some
Sad drops
Wept, at compleating of the mortal sin.

Remorse, the natural consequence of guilt, now opened their eyes to each others nakedness. No longer shielded by innocence from shame, they were mutually shocked at the reciprocal indecency of their appearance : art was now substituted to conceal what their criminality rendered too obvious ; they contrived aprons made of fig-leaves, and highly applauded themselves for acquiring, at the expence of their integrity, the faculty of invention, to remove difficulties which their former simplicity prevented their perceiving.

While they were in a state of innocence, they no sooner heard the voice of God approach them, than they ran with extacy to meet him, and with humble joy welcomed his gracious visits ; but now their Maker was become a terror to them, and they a terror to each other. Their consciences painted their transgression in the blackest colours, all hope was banished, and nothing remained but horror and despair.

When, therefore, after their transgression, they heard the voice of the Lord in the garden, instead of running to meet him as before with cheerfulness and joy, they flew to the most retired part of it, in order to conceal themselves from his sight.‡ But the Almighty soon called them from their dark retreat ; and, after a short examination, they both acknowledged their guilt. The man attempted to excuse himself by laying the blame on the woman, and pleaded her persuasions as the cause of his criminality. The woman endeavoured to remove the crime from herself to the serpent ; but the Almighty thought proper to make all three the objects of his distributive justice. As the serpent had been the original cause of this evil, God first passes sentence on him, which was, that (instead of going erect as he did before the fact) he should ever after creep on his belly, and thereupon become incapable of eating any food, except what was mingled with dust. The woman was given to understand that she had entailed upon herself sorrow from conception,

of the forbidden fruit, without receiving any damage, concluded it was innocent, and was therefore induced, by his example, to make the trial herself.

‡ Milton makes Adam, on this occasion, express himself as follows :

————— How shall I behold the face
Henceforth of God or angel, erst with joy
And raptures oft beheld ?—O ! might I here
In solitude live savage, in some glade
Obscur'd, where highest woods (impenetrable
To star or sun-light) spread their umbrage broad,
And brown as evening ! Cover me, ye pines !
Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs
Hide me, where I may never see them more !

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



The **EXPULSION** *of* **ADAM and EVE** *from* **PARADISE.**

ception, pain in child-birth, and subjection to her husband. The punishment of Adam consisted in a life of perpetual toil and slavery §, in order to keep in due subjection those passions and appetites, to gratify which he had transgressed the divine command.

The awful decree being thus solemnly pronounced, as well on the author of the offence, as the offenders themselves, the Almighty, to enhance their sense of the crime, and the tokens of his resentment, expelled the guilty pair from the blissful regions of Paradise, after which he placed at the east end of the garden a guard of

angels, in order not only to prevent their re-entrance, but to secure the forbidden fruit from the unhallowed hands of polluted mankind.

Thus, by this original pollution, fell our first parents, who, from the happiest condition that can be conceived, plunged themselves into a state of wretchedness, and thereby entailed misery on their descendants.

They ate the apple, it is true,
We taste the wormwood and the gall;
And to these distant ages rue
The dire effects of Adam's fall.

§ The words in the text are, *in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread*; which implies, that labour alone

should produce what, if he had not transgressed, nature would have spontaneously bestowed.

C H A P II.

The births of Cain and Abel. The murder of the latter, and banishment of the former. Of the descendants of Cain. The posterity of Adam. From the wickedness of the people God resolves to destroy the whole, except Noah and his family. The General Deluge. Death of Noah.

IN the space of two years after the expulsion of our first parents from Paradise, the human race was increased by Eve's being delivered of two sons, the first of whom she called Cain*, and the latter Abel†. As these two brothers were of different dispositions, so, when they grew up to years of maturity, they followed different employments. Abel, the younger, was just in his dealings, and amiable in his temper. Firmly believing that God saw all his actions, and knew their motives, he carefully avoided offending his beneficent Maker, and, in the simplicity of a shepherd's life, took a pleasure in practising all the social virtues. On the contrary, Cain was perversely wicked, and avariciously craving. His attention was principally directed to husbandry; but with all the benefits arising from cultivation, he was perpetually dissatisfied at what the earth produced, and, from his natural vile disposition, was guilty of the first murder ever committed.

It was customary, even in the infancy of the world, to make acknowledgments to God by way of oblation. This being agreed on by these two brothers, Cain offered the produce of his husbandry, and such fruits as nature bestowed by the assistance of art. Abel's oblation consisted of the milk of his herds, and the firstlings of his flocks. The Almighty was pleased to prefer the latter, being the simple productions of nature, to the former, which, no doubt, he considered as the interested offerings of laborious avarice. This preference raised the resentment of Cain, whose

soul was so impressed with hatred towards his brother, that he even shewed it in his countenance.

The Almighty, knowing the secrets of Cain's heart, condescended, in his great goodness, to expostulate with him to the following effect: "That his respect to true goodness was impartial, wherever he found it; and that, therefore, it was purely his own fault that his offering was not equally accepted: that piety was the proper disposition for a sacrificer, and that if herein he would emulate his brother, the same tokens of divine approbation should attend his oblations: that it was madness in him to harbour any revengeful thought against his brother, because if he proceeded to put them in execution, a dreadful punishment would immediately follow."

This kind admonition from the Almighty had so little effect upon Cain, that, instead of being sensible of his fault, and endeavouring to amend, he grew more and more incensed against his brother, and at length formed the resolution of gratifying his revenge by depriving him of his existence. Accordingly, going one day to Abel, and pretending the greatest kindness and affection, he asked if he would walk with him in the fields, as the weather was remarkably fine and pleasant. Abel, little suspecting the horrid design of his brother, readily complied with his request, when the latter had no sooner got him to a convenient spot, than he fell upon him and killed him‡; after which, to prevent discovery, he dug a hole, and interred the body.

But

* As soon as Eve was delivered of her first child, she cried out, in a transport of joy, *I have gotten a man from the Lord*, being persuaded that this son was the *promised seed* mentioned by the Almighty in the sentence he passed on the serpent: *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*. In consequence of this persuasion

Eve called her first son Cain, which signifies *possession* or *acquisition*.

† The word *Abel*, in the Hebrew language, signifies *vanity*, and, according to some, was given him as an intimation of the little esteem his mother had for him in comparison of her first-born.

‡ As warlike instruments were not at this time in use, it is

But it was not long before Cain was called to an account for this horrid deed. The all-seeing God, from whom no secrets can be hid, appeared before him, and demanded the reason of his brother's absence. Sensible of the enormity of his crime, Cain attempted to reply; but guilt, for a time, tied his tongue. At length, in faltering accents, he tried to evade what he did not dare positively to answer. He pretended to be surprized at not having seen his brother for some time; and likewise observed, that he was neither the guardian of Abel, nor empowered to watch his motions.

On this the Almighty charged Cain, in direct terms, with the murder of his brother; and, after expressing to him the atrociousness of the crime, and how much it cried to heaven for vengeance, proceeded to pass sentence on him. "Now (says he) art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."

The wretched criminal, struck with the severity of this denunciation, convinced of the atrocious nature of his offence, and deploring the misery of his situation, exclaimed, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." He was apprehensive of meeting with worse evils than his sentence really imported; and that he should not only feel the miseries of banishment, but likewise be subjected to the loss of his life by the hands of his fellow-creatures. But, to ease his mind in this last respect, the Almighty was pleased to declare to him, that whoever should slay him, vengeance should be taken on them seven fold. He likewise set a particular mark * on him, whereby he might escape his supposed danger; for it was the divine intent to punish him by the prolongation of his life, during the remainder of which he should be loaded with infamy, and under all the horrors of a guilty conscience.

In consequence of the divine sentence, Cain left his parents and relations, and went into a strange country. He was banished from that sacred spot where the Almighty had given frequent manifestations of his glorious presence; and though by the divine decree no person was permitted to hurt him, yet the consciousness of his own guilt made him fearful of every thing he saw or heard. After wandering about a considerable time through different countries, he at length settled with his family in the land of Nod. Here he lived for a course of years, in

which time his descendants being greatly increased, in order to keep them together, he built a city, and called it after the name of his son Enoch, which, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies a dedication †.

From the loins of Cain, in regular succession, came Lamech, the son of Methusael, who introduced polygamy by marrying two wives, the one named Adah, and the other Zillah. Among the children by the former of these wives he had two sons, namely, Jabal and Jubal, the first of whom made great improvements in the management of cattle, and the other invented the psaltery, and first gave melody to music. By Zillah he had Tubal-Cain, who was celebrated for his great strength, excelled in martial exercises, and first discovered the art of forging and polishing metals. Lamech had likewise a daughter called Naamah, (which denotes *fair and beautiful*) who is supposed to have been the first person that found out the art of spinning and weaving.

Having said thus much of Cain and his posterity, we must now return to our primitive parents, Adam and Eve. The death of the righteous Abel and the banishment of Cain, afflicted them to the heart; and they continued some time in the deepest lamentation. At length the Almighty was pleased to alleviate their affliction by a promise that they should have another son, who should be a comfort and consolation to them in their old age. Accordingly, in the proper course of time, Eve was delivered of another boy, whom they called Seth, which signifies *substitute*, or *appointed*, because God was pleased to send him instead of *Abel, whom Cain slew*. At this time Adam was 130 years old, after which he lived 800 years, and begat several other children, both sons and daughters.

The male posterity of Adam, in the line of Seth, was as follows:

When Seth was 105 years old, he had a son named Enos, in whose days the sacred historian informs us that men began to institute stated forms and ceremonies in the worship of Almighty God. After the birth of Enos, Seth lived 807 years, so that the whole of his life was 912 years.

Enos, at the age of 90, had a son, whom he named Cainan; after which he lived 815 years; in the whole 905.

Cainan, when 70, had a son named Mahalaleel; after which he lived 840 years; in all 910.

Mahalaleel, when 65, had a son named Jared; after which he lived 800 years: in all 865.

Jared,

is generally supposed that Cain murdered Abel by knocking out his brains either with a stone or a piece of wood; but in whatever manner it was done, this we know, from the words of Divine revelation, that Cain was the first murderer, and Abel the person first murdered.

* Various have been the opinions with regard to the mark which God set upon Cain. Some say that the Almighty stigmatized him in the forehead with a letter of his name. Others, that he looked frightfully, his head shook, and he had a trembling in his whole body; and that his face was blasted with lightning from the Shechinah, or Divine Presence, before whom he was again never to appear. But if it is considered, that the word which we render a *mark* signifies also a *sign*, the sense of the expression in the text may be rendered thus, *God appointed to Cain a sign or token*, to assure

him that no one should kill him. It must be here remembered that the world was at this time about 130 years old, and abounded with people descended from the sons and daughters of Adam.

† Josephus, in speaking of Cain, after his banishment, says, "While he wandered about his punishment did not in the least tend to his reformation; for, bad by disposition, his depravity daily increased. As soon as he was settled, he thought only of sensual pleasures, and gratified his passions at the expence of his neighbours. He augmented his wealth by plunder, excited his followers to acts of rapine, and became the leader of a band of ruffians, whose pursuits centered in vice, and whose subsistence depended on violence. Displeased with the simplicity of bartering one commodity for another, he invented weights and measures."

Jared, when 162 had a son named Enoch †; after which he lived 800 years: in all 962.

Enoch, when 65, had a son named Methuselah; after which he lived 300: in all 365.

Methuselah, when 187, had a son named Lamech; after which he lived 782: in all 969.

Lamech, when 182, had a son named Noah; after which he lived 595: in all 777. And

Noah, when 500 years old, had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet; from whom the world was replenished after the general deluge.

This is the genealogy which Moses gives us of the posterity of Adam, in the line of Seth; and if we consider the prodigious length of mens lives in this age ‖, the strength of their constitutions from a temperate life, and the advanced years in which they begot children, the number of inhabitants previous to the flood must have been very immense.

The descendants of Seth, and those of Cain, lived separate for a considerable time, the former despising the latter on account of their natural cruelty. The Sethites, who adhered to the service of God, and diligently attended to their religious duties, were stiled the *Sons of God*; in distinction to which the descendants of Cain, who led profligate and impious life, were termed the Sons and *and daughters of men*.

After the death of Adam*, the Sethites retired from the plain where they had hitherto resided to the mountains opposite Paradise; and, for some time, continued to live in the fear of God, and to preserve the strictest rules of piety and virtue. In the course of time, the descendants of Cain, which were now become very numerous, spread themselves over all that part of the country which had been left by the Sethites, even to the confines of the mountains where Seth had fixed his abode; and here they continued that abandoned course of life they had followed before their removal.

By this close connection, the Sethites had frequent opportunities of seeing the daughters of Cain, who being exceeding beautiful, they were so captivated † with their charms, that they en-

tered into nuptial alliances with them; and from this intercourse were born men of a very gigantic size, who were no less remarkable for their daring wickedness, than for their bold and adventurous undertakings. Thus did the example of the wicked family of Cain prevail, and, by degrees, destroy all the remains of religious duties in the posterity of Seth. The righteous Noah used his utmost efforts to convince them of the enormity of their conduct; but all his admonitions were in vain: the bent of their thoughts had taken another turn, and their whole study and contrivance was, how to gratify their inordinate passions.

This universal depravity of mankind so offended the Almighty, that, as the sacred historian informs us, he *repented that he had made man on the earth* §; and, as a proper punishment for their offences, thought of destroying not only the whole of the human race (Noah and his family excepted) but also the brute creation, which he had formed for the use of ungrateful man. But before the Almighty fixed the resolution of executing his design, he thought proper to give one chance to the principal objects of his resentment, which was, that if, in the space of 120 years, they should forsake their evil ways, repent and reform, his mercy should be at liberty to interpose, and reverse their doom. This he communicated to his servant Noah, who, for his great justice and piety, had found favour in his sight; and for which his family (consisting only of eight persons) were to be exempted from the general destruction.

Notwithstanding the merciful and beneficent promises of the Almighty, yet such was the corrupt state of mankind at this time, and so lost were they to every sense of virtue, that they still prosecuted their vicious courses, and subjected themselves to the consequences of the divine displeasure. Finding, therefore, that all lenity and forbearance tended to no purpose, except to make them more bold and licentious, God, at length, made known to his servant Noah his awful determination of involving them, and the earth

“ measures, rendered trade a matter of artifice, and made commerce depend on craft, destroying at once confidential trust and generous hospitality. He was the first who invaded the common rights of mankind by bounds and inclosures, and the first who built a city, fortified and peopled it.”

† Of all the posterity of Adam, the most remarkable is Enoch, who, for his distinguished piety and virtue, was exempted from mortality, being immediately, that is, without passing through the valley of the shadow of death, translated to the heavenly mansions.

‖ The great age of the antediluvians has induced some commentators to suspect, that the years mentioned by Moses were only lunar, consisting each of about thirty days, imagining that it was impossible for human nature to have subsisted for so long a period. But this is absurd to the last degree; for Methuselah himself, according to this computation, would have lived little more than 80 years; and some of the persons mentioned among Seth's descendants must have had children when only six years of age. The years, therefore, mentioned by Moses were undoubtedly solar years, consisting of 365 days. The natural cause of this primæval longevity cannot be ascertained; but doubtless the principal effect must be ascribed to the efficiency of the Divine will, and was wisely ordered by Providence, that the world might be sooner peopled, knowledge and religion sooner propagated, and arts and sciences sooner brought to perfection.

* The sacred historian does not inform us at what exact

period Adam paid the debt of nature, nor in what place his remains were deposited. The antient Arabians tell us, that he was buried at Hebron, in the cave of Machpelah, which Abraham, many ages after, bought for a burying-place for himself and family. They likewise say, that when Adam found his end approaching, he called his son Seth, and the other branches of his numerous family, to whom he gave a strict charge, that they should always live separate, and have no manner of intercourse with the impious family of the murderer Cain.

† The manner in which the Sethites were captivated with the daughters of Cain is thus described by Milton:

They on the plain
Long had not walk'd, when from the tents, behold!
A bevy of fair women, richly gay
In gems and wanton dress: To th' harp they sung
Soft am'rous ditties, and in dance came on.
The men, tho' grave, ey'd them, and let their eyes
Rove without rein; till, in the am'rous net
First caught, they lik'd, and each his liking chose.

§ This expression must not be taken in the literal sense of the words, *for God is not the son of man that he should repent*; but it is a figurative expression, and adapted to our apprehensions. The meaning, therefore, is, that as all men were corrupt, and turning a deaf ear to his preacher Noah, the Almighty was determined to destroy man whom he had created.

earth they inhabited, in one general destruction, by a flood of water. He likewise assured him, that as he had, in a particular manner, testified his fidelity to his Maker, he would take care to preserve him and his family, together with such other creatures as were necessary for the restoration of their species, from the general calamity. To effect this, he gave him orders to make an ark, or large vessel, of gopher wood*, and, that it might be secured from the violence of the waves, to pitch it both within and without. The form and dimensions of this building are thus described by the sacred historian: *And this is the form which thou shalt make it of: the length of the work shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits†. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above: and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.*

Having received these instructions from God, Noah, in obedience to the divine command, immediately set about the arduous work, which he finished, according to God's direction, seven days before the rain began to fall, having been encouraged so to do by an assurance from his Maker, that though he meant to destroy the world in general, yet he would establish his covenant with him.

The ark being finished, the Almighty commanded Noah to take into it *every living thing of all flesh*, both cattle and beasts of the field, birds and fowls of the air, and reptiles of all kinds; of the *unclean*‡ only one pair each, but of the *clean* seven pair. That he should likewise make a proper provision of food for the different animals; and, having placed them in their respective apartments, should then enter the ark himself, taking with him his wife, together with his sons and their wives§.

* By Gopher-wood is supposed to be meant the cypress-tree, which abounded in the plains where Noah built the ark.

† The common cubit is allowed to contain almost twenty-two inches; according to which measure the ark must have been 547 English feet long, 91 broad, and 64 high. So that it was large enough for the purposes intended; namely, that of saving a remnant of all creatures on the face of the earth.

‡ It is the opinion of some, that though with respect to mere food the distinction of *clean* and *unclean* was not known before the law, yet with respect to sacrifice it was; for the rite of sacrifice being instituted before the flood, this difference also of beasts was before it. Wherefore, the *unclean* beasts must certainly mean such as are rapacious, which were not to be offered to God.

§ The building of the Ark, with the entrance of the animals, together with Noah and his family, into it, is thus described by Milton:

Then from the mountain hewing timber tall,
Began to build a vessel of huge bulk;
Measur'd by cubit, length and breadth, and height;
Smear'd round with pitch; and in the side a door
Contriv'd; and of provisions laid in large
For man and beast: when lo, a wonder strange!
Of every beast and bird, and insect small
Came sevens, and pairs, and enter'd in, as taught
Their order: last the sire and his three sons,
With their four wives: and God made fast the door.

|| That is, in the month of October; for antiently, before the Israelites came out of Egypt, the year began about the middle of September.

¶ The situation of the world during the course of the flood is thus beautifully described by Dryden:

All things being adjusted, agreeable to the divine direction, Noah entered the ark, with his family, in the 600th year of his age; and on the seventeenth day of the second month || (which was seven days after his entrance) the whole face of nature began to wear a gloomy aspect, and to appear as if the earth was to be finally dissolved, and all things return to their primitive chaos. The windows or cataracts of heaven were opened, and the earth was overspread with a dreadful inundation. In vain did sinful mortals seek for protection, or endeavour to shelter themselves from the common destruction; for mountains and vallies were soon alike, and every refuge was banished their sight. For forty days and nights did the rain continue to fall, without the least intermission; when at length the ark began to float, and, in process of time, was elevated above the highest mountains. A dismal scene now presented itself! the earth, with all its beautiful variety of nature and art, was no more! nothing appeared to the sight but a watery desert, abounding with wrecks of the once lovely creation ¶.

The Almighty, having thus avenged himself of a sinful world, and reflecting upon Noah, and the poor remains of his creatures in the ark, caused a drying north wind to arise, the flood-gates of heaven to be stopped, and the falling of the waters to cease; by which means the deluge began to abate, and the waters gradually subsiding, in process of time the earth again appeared.

The first discovery Noah made of the cessation of the flood was, from the ark resting on the mountains of Ararat **. This was about the beginning of May, and about the middle of the following month the tops of the mountains appeared. But Noah, (who, no doubt, was glad to

Th' expanded waters gather on the plain,
They float the fields, and overtop the grain:
Then rushing onward, with a sweepy sway,
Bear flocks, and folds, and lab'ring hinds away:
Nor safe their dwellings were; for, sapp'd by floods,
Their houses fell upon their household goods.
The solid piles, too strongly built to fall,
High o'er their heads, behold a wat'ry wall.
Now seas and earth were in confusion lost;
A world of waters, and without a coast.
One climbs a cliff, one in his boat is borne,
And ploughs above where late he sow'd his corn.
Others o'er chimney-tops and turrets row,
And drop their anchors on the meads below:
Or downward driven, bruise the tender vine;
Or toss'd aloft, are knock'd against a pine.
And where of late the kids had crop'd the grass,
The monsters of the deep now take their place.
Insulting Nereids on the cities ride,
And wond'ring dolphins o'er the palace glide;
On leaves and masts of mighty oaks they browse,
And their broad fins entangle in the boughs.
The frighted wolf now swims among the sheep,
The yellow lion wanders in the deep:
His rapid force no longer helps the boar,
The stag swims faster than the swan before:
The fowls long beating on their wings in vain,
Despair of land, and drop into the main.
Now hills and vales no more distinction know,
And levell'd nature lies oppress'd below.

** There have been various opinions relative to the true situation of the mountain where the ark rested; but the most consonant to reason is that which places it in the Upper Armenia to the east of the river Tigris.

to see the appearance of any thing substantial, after so long a confinement) wisely considering, that though the mountains were visible, the vallies might be yet overflowed, waited forty days longer before he attempted any further discovery. At the expiration of that time, opening the window of the ark, he let go a raven, supposing that the scent of dead bodies would allure him to fly a considerable distance. Encouraged by the absence of the raven for seven days, he let fly a dove, which finding no resting-place, returned to its old habitation. Seven days after, he sent out the same bird, who then returned with an olive branch in its mouth, a happy certainty that the waters were removed from the place where the olive tree stood. Still, however, determined not to be too hasty, he remained in the ark seven days more, when sending out the dove a third time, and she not returning, he concluded that the waters were entirely withdrawn. In consequence of this he made the necessary preparations for leaving the ark; but, mindful of God's directions, ventured not forth till fifty-five days after, in order that the earth might be properly dry for his reception. Having, at the expiration of that period, received God's positive command to leave the ark, he accordingly came out of it on the twenty-seventh day of the second month, bringing with him every creature that had been retained for replenishing the earth. Thus ended Noah's long and melancholy confinement, which, from the time of his entering the ark to that of his leaving it, amounted exactly to one solar year*.

The first thing Noah did, after quitting the ark, was, to erect an altar, on which he offered sacrifices to God, for his great goodness in preserving him and his family from the general destruction. The Almighty, knowing the purity of Noah's intentions, was so well pleased with his conduct, that he gave him his divine assurance that he would never more curse the

ground for man's sake, nor should the earth ever be again destroyed by a general deluge. In confirmation of this, he appointed a bow † to appear in the heavens, as a token, and which was now to be the ratification of the truth of his promise.

Having, by this divine promise, eased the mind of Noah, who was fearful of a second deluge, the Almighty, after blessing him and his sons, granted them many singular privileges, such as far exceeded those he had bestowed on our primitive parents. Before the flood, mankind had no other food than vegetables, but now the Almighty, after giving Noah and his sons the same dominion over the creation as he had done Adam, permitted them to kill any creatures they thought proper for food, only with this restriction, that they should not eat *the blood thereof*. This restraint was certainly laid by God, to prevent the shedding of human blood, against which he denounces the following sentence, *whoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed*. With these grants and promises God gave the same encouragement to Noah and his family that he did to our first progenitors, by telling them to *be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth*.

Though the deluge had destroyed all the inhabitants of the earth, (except what were retained in the ark for forming the new world) yet the vegetable part of the creation still existed, and, in a short time, by the genial warmth of the sun, again appeared in all its glory.

Previous to the flood, Noah had directed his attention to husbandry, and the earth having now resumed its former appearance, he betook himself to the same employment. Among other improvements, he planted a vineyard, and, prompted by natural curiosity to taste the fruit of his own labour, invented a machine for extracting the juice from the grape. Pleased with the taste of the liquor, and being unacquainted with the strength of it, he unwisely gave

* The following is the kalendar of this melancholy year, as given by Mr. Basnage:

The year of the World's Creation 1656.

- I. September. Methuselah died at the age of 969 years.
- II. October. Noah and his family entered the ark.
- III. November the 17th the fountains of the great deep were broken open.
- IV. December the 26th the rain began, and continued forty days and forty nights.
- V. January. All the men and beasts that were upon the earth were buried under the waters.
- VI. February. The rain continued.
- VII. March. The waters remained in their elevation till the 27th, when they began to abate.
- VIII. April the 27th the ark rested on Mount Ararat.
- IX. May. They did nothing while the waters were retreating.
- X. June the 1st the tops of the mountains appeared.
- XI. July the 11th Noah let go a raven, which (as Basnage thinks) returned no more.
The 18th he let go a dove, which returned.
The 25th he let go the dove again, which returned with the olive-branch.
- XII. August the 2d the dove went out the third time, and returned no more.
- I. September the 1st the dry land appeared.
- II. October the 27th Noah went out of the ark with his family.

† This is the same that we call the Rainbow, which re-

ceived its name from its strong resemblance to a bow or an arch. It has been argued, whether there was a rainbow before the flood, and there have been different opinions concerning it. At present, among protestant divines, the most general received opinion is, that when God says, *I do set my bow in the cloud*, he does not intimate that it was not before, but rather seems to have spoken to the following import: "That thou, Noah, may have no doubt of my veracity, look at the rainbow, the natural sign of a shower; and as often as you see it, be assured that I will not drown the earth any more."

It is well known that the rainbow is produced by the refraction of the sun's light in drops of rain, and never appears but when the sun shines at the same time that the rain falls. It was certainly the sign of God's covenant with man, and should, therefore, be considered as an illustrious symbol of the Divine mercy and goodness to confirm our belief and confidence in God. "Look upon the rainbow (says the son of Sirach) and praise him that made it; very beautiful it is in the brightness thereof: it compasseth the heaven about with a glorious circle, and the hands of the Most High have bended it." It is a bow of no hostile intention; a bow painted in variegated colours on the disburdened cloud. How vast is the extent, how delicate the texture of that shadowy arch! Elegant its form and rich its tinctures; but more delightful its sacred significancy; while the violet and the rose blush in its beautiful aspect, the olive-branch smiles in its gracious import. It writes, in radiant dyes, what the angels sung in harmonious strains, *Peace on earth, and good-will towards men*.

gave a loose to indulgence, and, by drinking too freely, became quite intoxicated. In consequence of this, he laid himself down to sleep in his tent, where, either from the rustling of the wind, or the discomposure of his body, he was uncovered on that part which natural modesty teaches us to conceal.

This circumstance produced the first instance of human degeneracy after the flood. The *old* world was destroyed for the wickedness of its inhabitants, and therefore it might have been expected that the *new* world would have been filled with people of a better disposition: but, as in the ark there were unclean as well as clean beasts, so in the family of Noah there were two good sons, and one naturally wicked, the two former being Shem and Japhet, and the latter Ham.

The unseemly situation of Noah, from his intoxication was first discovered by this wicked son, who, instead of covering his father's nakedness, and concealing his shame, exposed his weakness, and made him the subject of his scorn and derision. But his brothers were far from being pleased with his conduct: possessed

of filial piety, and moved at the indecent posture of their aged parent, they no sooner saw him than they ran and fetched a garment, and immediately covered that nakedness which their pious modesty would not permit them to behold.

When Noah recovered from the stupefaction into which the wine had thrown him, and was informed of the unworthy manner in which his son Ham had treated him, he cursed his race, in the person of Canaan, his grandson: *cursed*, said he, *be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren* †. On the contrary, reflecting how respectfully his other two sons behaved, he rewarded their pious care with giving each his blessing; all which, in process of time, was fulfilled in their posterity.

These are all the particulars given us by the sacred historian, relative to Noah, except that he lived 350 years after the deluge, and paid the debt of nature at the age of 950. At what exact period he died we are not informed, neither the place of his interment; but, according to oriental tradition, his remains were deposited in some part of Mesopotamia.

C H A P. III.

The building of the tower of Babel. Confusion of languages. Dispersion of the people, and first settlement of the different nations. Birth and marriage of Abram. Death of Terah, the father of Abram.

IT is not in the least to be doubted, but that Noah and his family, for some years after the flood, continued to reside in the neighbourhood of the mountains of Armenia, where the ark had rested. But his descendants, in the course of time, having a numerous progeny, the greater part of them quitted their primitive spot, and directing their course eastwards, came at length to the plain of Shinar, on the banks of the river Euphrates. Attracted by the beauty of the place, the convenience of its situation, and the natural fertility of the soil, they resolved not to proceed any farther, but to make this their fixed place of residence.

Having formed this resolution, in order to render themselves conspicuous to future generations, they determined to erect a city, and in it a building of such stupendous height, as should be the wonder of the world. Their principal

motives in doing this were, to keep themselves together, in one body, that, by their united strength and councils, as the world increased, they might bring others under their subjection, and thereby become masters of the universe.

The idea of the intended tower gave them the most singular satisfaction, and the novelty of the design induced them to enter upon its construction with the greatest alacrity. One inconvenience, however, arose, of which they were not apprized, namely, there being no stone in the country wherewith to build it. But this defect was soon supplied by the nature of the soil, which being clayey, they soon converted into bricks, and cemented them together with a pitchy substance, called *bitumen*, the country producing that article in great abundance.

As the artificers were numerous, the work was carried on with great expedition, and in a short

† The curse denounced by Noah on the descendants of Ham has afforded many arguments as well among divines as other writers. But the most forcible are those used by that learned and eminent divine Dr. Henry Southwell, who, in his notes on this part of the Bible (the whole of which are equally explanatory) says, "We must attend to this circumstance with great circumspection, because the Deists have asserted that it was inconsistent with the spirit of prophecy for Noah to curse Canaan, who, in this case, seems to have been innocent. To this it is answered, that the words are not a curse, but only a prediction. Noah, as the patriarch of the new world, was enlightened by the spirit of God, and, consequently, could foretell future events. He was not prompted by resentment, but God, willing to manifest his right to the government of the world, enabled his servant to disclose the purposes of his providence towards the future race of his children. God, foreseeing the wickedness that would be committed by the children of Ham, commissioned Noah to

pronounce a curse upon them, and to devote them to servitude, as a punishment for their disobedience.

"Such was the nature of this prophecy; and now let us see in what manner it was fulfilled. The first instance we meet with, is the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone from heaven, for the horrid and unnatural crimes of the inhabitants. From them we are naturally led to consider the state of those polluted people, whom the children of Israel drove out of the land of Canaan. Their religion was bad, and their morals worse; for corrupt religion is sure to nourish crimes. They gloried in such wickedness as ought not to be mentioned, and the greatest enormities were looked upon by them as trifles. It is remarkable, that Hannibal, a descendant of Canaan, should cry out in the agony of his soul, 'I acknowledge the fate of Carthage!' From this it is evident, that Noah's prophecy had been conveyed down by tradition to the Carthaginians."

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible?



— GENESIS, XI. 7. —

*The Building of **BABEL** interrupted by the Confusion of Tongues*

short time the walls were raised to a prodigious height §. But the Almighty, being dissatisfied with their proceedings, thought proper to interpose, and totally put an end to their ambitious project; so that this first attempt of their vanity became only a monument of their folly and weakness.

Though the descendants of Noah were at this time exceeding numerous, yet they all spoke one language ||. In order, therefore, to render their undertaking ineffectual, and to lessen the towering hopes of these aspiring mortals, the Almighty formed the resolution of confounding their language. In consequence of this, a universal jargon suddenly took place, and the different dialects caused such a distraction of thought, that, incapable of understanding, or making known to each other their respective ideas, they were thrown into the utmost disorder. By this awful stroke of divine justice, they were not only deprived of prosecuting their intended plan, but of the greatest pleasure a social being can enjoy, namely, mutual converse and agreeable intercourse. We are not, however, to suppose that each individual had a peculiar dialect or language to himself, but only the several tribes or families, which are supposed to have been about seventy in number. These detaching themselves according to their respective dialects, left the spot, which, before the consequences of their presumption, they had considered as the most delightful on earth, and took up their temporary residences in such places as they either pitched on by choice, or were directed to by chance.

Thus did the Almighty not only defeat the designs of these ambitious people, but likewise accomplished his own, by having the world more generally inhabited than it otherwise would have been. The spot on which they had begun to erect their tower was, from the judgment that attended so rash an undertaking, called Babel * (afterwards Babylon) which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *confusion*.

The confusion of tongues, and dispersion of the family of Noah, happened 101 years after the flood, as is evident from the birth of Peleg, the son of Eber, (who was great grandson to Shem) and born in the 101st year after that memorable period. He received his name from

this singular circumstance, the word *Peleg*, in the Hebrew language, signifying *partition* or *dispersion*.

The descendants of Noah being now dispersed, in process of time, from their great increase, they scattered themselves to distant parts of the earth; and, according to their respective families, settled in different parts of the world. Some took up their residence in Asia; some in Africa, and others in Europe. But by what means they obtained possession of the several countries they inhabited, the sacred historian has not informed us. It is, however, natural to suppose, that their respective situations did not take place from chance, but mature deliberation; and that a proper assignment was made of such and such places, according to the divisions and sub-divisions of the different families.

In order to ascertain a proper idea of the manner in which the world was populated after the flood, and confusion of tongues, we shall give the genealogy of Noah's three sons, and describe the respective parts of the earth possessed by their descendants; in doing which, we shall, agreeable to the manner of Moses, begin with those of Japheth, who, though usually mentioned last, was the eldest son of Noah.

It is to be observed, that the grand-children of Noah made it an invariable rule to give their own names to the countries of which they became possessed, and where they settled, in order to perpetuate their memories to future posterity.

The sons of Japheth were seven in number, who spread themselves over Asia, from the mountains Taurus and Auranus, to the river Tanais, and then entering Europe, penetrated as far as Spain, distinguishing the countries as they proceeded, by their own proper appellations †, viz. *Gomer* gave title to the Gomerites, now called Galatians, or Gauls, by the Greeks. *Magog* founded the Magogites, since stiled Scythians, or Tartars. From *Media* originated the Medæans or Medes. *Javan* was the founder of the Ionians and Greeks in general. *Tubal*, of the Iberians, or Spaniards: and *Masbech*, of the Meschinians or Cappadocians: and *Tiras* of the Thiræans or Thracians.

Gomer had three sons, the eldest of whom, *Askenaz*,

§ From the intended height of this building, which, according to the text, was to reach unto heaven, some have been inclined to think that their design of erecting it arose not only from ambition but fear, lest they might be overwhelmed by a second deluge.

|| This language is thought to be the same as spoken by Adam, from whom it might easily be communicated to Methuselah, and from him to his grandson Noah, who propagated it among his posterity. There is great reason to think it was the Hebrew language, and that a considerable part of it still remains in the Bible; for Shem, the son of Noah, was for some time cotemporary with Abraham, in whose family the same language which they both spoke continued at least till the days of Moses.

* This remarkable occurrence is thus mentioned in the Sibylline writings: "When all men were of one language, they attempted to erect a prodigious high tower, as if they meant to ascend to heaven. But God defeated their design by destroying the building, and confusing the language of the people, on which account the place is still called Babylon."

Some of the Jewish doctors say, that God either overturned the tower by a terrible tempest, or else destroyed it by fire from heaven. Be this, however, as it may, there is not the

least doubt but it long remained a monument of human vanity, and of the omnipotence of that Being, who called the universe out of nothing.

Herodotus tells us, the Tower of Babel was a furlong in length, and as much in breadth; and Strabo determines the height to have been a furlong, that is, the eighth part of a mile, or 660 feet. He says, it consisted of eight square towers, one above another, gradually decreasing in breadth, which, with the winding ascent from the bottom to the top, on the outside, gave it the resemblance of a pyramid. The ascent (says Strabo) was so very broad, that it afforded room for horses and carriages to pass each other.

† Several of these nations still retain the names given them by their founder, others have lost their original appellations, and some are distinguished by terms corrupted from the primitive denominations. The Greeks principally occasioned these innovations, for when power gave them importance they arrogated to themselves the glory of antiquity, corrupted the names of other nations to give them a more modern appearance, and pretended that, from the emigrations of their predecessors, the surrounding realms were peopled, for which reason they took the liberty to prescribe laws for their observance, as they had invented appellations for their distinction.

Askanaz, took possession of Ascania (which is part of the Lesser Phrygia.) The second son, named *Riphab*, possessed himself of the Rippaan mountains; and *Togarmab*, the third son, took Galatia and part of Cappadocia.

Javan had four sons, namely, *Elisbab*, who seated himself in Peleponnesus; *Tarsbish*, in part of Spain; *Kittim* in Italy; and *Dodanim* in France.

By these, and the colonies which, in process of time, proceeded from them, not only a considerable part of Asia, but all Europe, with the adjacent islands, were well stocked with inhabitants descended from Japheth, who, though thus dispersed, spoke the same language, and, for a time at least, preserved a correspondence with the respective tribes or families to which they originally belonged.

The descendants of *SHEM*, the second son of Noah, (from whom originated the Hebrew nation) were five sons, who possessed themselves of those parts of Asia, which extend from the Euphrates to the Indian ocean. *Elam*, the eldest, took possession of a country in Persia, at first called after himself, but, in the time of Daniel, it obtained the name of Susiana. *Asshur* founded the Assyrian empire, in which he built several cities, particularly one called Nineveh†. *Arphaxad* founded Chaldæa; *Lud* Lydia; and *Aram* that part of Syria which extends itself to the Mediterranean seas.

Aram had four sons, namely, *Uz*, who seated himself in the country called Damascus; *Hul* took possession of Armenia; *Mash*, of the mountain Masius; and *Gether*, of a part of Mesopotamia.

Arphaxad was the father of *Salah*, whose son *Eber* gave name to the Hebrew nation. *Joc-tan*, the first-born of Eber had thirteen children, all of whom settled themselves in that part of the world which is situated between Syria and the river Cophene in Judea. The youngest son of Eber was *Peleg*, who, as we have before observed, was so called, because, at the time of his birth, the dispersion of the people took place.

The descendants of *HAM* (the youngest son of Noah) were four sons, namely, *Cush*, who took up his residence in that part of Armenia lying towards Egypt; *Mizraim*§, in both Upper and Lower Egypt; *Phut*, in part of Lybia; and *Canaan*, in that part of the country which was afterwards called by his name.

Cush, the eldest son of Ham, had several children, viz. *Seba*, who settled on the south-west of Arabia; *Havilah* fixed himself in that part of the country situated on the river Pison, where it

leaves the Euphrates, and runs into the Arabian Gulf; *Sabtab* took up his residence on the same shore, a little to the north of his brother Havilah; *Raamab* and *Sabtecha*, together with the two sons of the former, (namely, *Seba* and *Dedan*) settled themselves on the same coast, farther to the east; and *Nimrod*||, the last son of Cush, was founder of the Babylonish empire.

Besides the three sons of Mizraim, (who, after the death of their father, divided his territories into three parts) he had three others, viz. *Ludim* and *Lebabim*, who peopled Lybia; and *Castubim*, who seated himself at Castisots, near the entrance of Egypt from Palestine. *Castubim* had two sons, namely, *Philistim* and *Caphthorim*, the former of whom established the country of the Philistines, between the borders of Canaan and the Mediterranean sea; and the latter, after his father's death, took possession of his territories.

The sons of Canaan were, *Sidon*, the founder of the Sidonians, who lived in Phœnicia; *Heth*, the founder of the Hittites, who lived near Hebron; *Emor*, the founder of the Amorites, who lived in the mountains of Judea; and *Arva*, the founder of the Arvadites, who resided near Sidon. But whether the other sons of Canaan settled in this country, or not, cannot be ascertained with any certainty; only this we know, that they must have taken up their residence somewhere between Sidon and Gerar, and Admah and Zoboim; those places being the boundaries of the land they possessed.

Thus we find, that, in the first dispersion of the people over the world, the descendants of *Japheth* not only possessed all Europe, but also a considerable portion of Asia. The posterity of *Shem* had in their possession part of the Greater and Lesser Asia, and probably all the countries to the east, as far as China. The descendants of *Ham* possessed all Africa, with a great part of Asia.

But before we quit the genealogy of Noah's descendants, it will be necessary to mention some further particulars relative to the posterity of his second son Shem, from whom the Hebrews took their rise, and who will be found the principal objects of the succeeding history.

About two years after the flood, at which time Shem was 100 years old, he had a son named Arphaxad; after which time he lived 500 years; so that the whole of his life was exactly 600.

Arphaxad, when 35, had a son named Salah; after which he lived 403: in all 438.

Salah, when 30, had a son named Eber, (from whom his descendants were called Hebrews) after which he lived 403 years; in all 433.

Eber,

† This city was of prodigious extent, and originally the capital of Assyria. It was situate on the banks of the river Tigris, and was (according to Diodorus Siculus) forty-seven miles in circumference, and surrounded with lofty walls and towers, the former being 200 feet in height, and so very broad that three chariots might be driven on them abreast; and the latter 200 feet in height, and 1500 in number. This city underwent many revolutions, and was at length totally destroyed by the Saracens. Modern travellers say, that the ruins of this city may still be seen on the eastern banks of the Tigris, opposite the city Mosul.

§ After the death of Mizraim (who was king of Egypt) the country he possessed was, by three of his sons, divided into as many kingdoms, viz. *Ananim* was king of Tanis, or Lower Egypt, called afterwards Delta; *Naphulim*, of Naph, or Memphis, in Upper Egypt; and *Pathrusim* founded the kingdom of Pathros, or Thebes in Thebais.

|| This Nimrod, even in those early days, particularly distinguished himself for his great courage and bravery. The place which, by lot, fell to him was greatly infested with wild beasts. He therefore betook himself to the practice of hunting, and, with the assistance of several others remarked for

Eber, when 34, had a son name Peleg, in whose time the earth came to be divided; after which he lived 430 years; in all 464.

Peleg, when 30, had a son named Reu, after which he lived 209 years; in all 239.

Reu, when 32, had a son named Serug; after which he lived 207 years; in all 239.

Serug, when 30, had son named Nahor; after which he lived 200 years; in all 230.

Nahor, when 29, had a son named Terah; after which he lived 119 years; in all 148.

Terah was the father of the first great patriarch after Noah, namely Abraham. He had likewise two other sons, the one called Nahor, and the other Haran. The last of these, who was the eldest of the three, died before his father at Ur, in Chaldea, the place of his nativity. He left behind him a son named Lot, and two daughters, the elder of whom, called Milchah, was espoused to her uncle Nahor, and the

younger, named Sarai, was married to her uncle Abram.

An universal depravity of human nature now displayed itself in all parts of the world, but more particularly in the city of Ur*, where the practice of idolatry was carried to its utmost height. In consequence of this, Terah resolved to leave his abode, that he might no longer be an eye-witness of the iniquity of the people. Having formed this resolution, he quitted Ur, and taking with him his son Abram and his wife, together with his grandson Lot, set out with an intent of visiting the land of Canaan. In his journey he stopped at a place called Haran, (or Charran) a city of Mesopotamia, where, being seized with a violent illness, he was compelled to make it the place of his residence. The violence of the disorder prevailing over the power of medicine, nature at length gave way, and Terah died at Haran, in the 205th year of his age.

CHAP.

for their courage; not only cleared the country of those dangerous animals, but procured great honour and renown for his other exploits; so that at length he raised himself to the dignity of a king, the first of that character supposed to have been in the universe. He is likewise the first man we meet with in the scriptures who made innovations on the territories of others; for he dispossessed Ashur, the son of Shem, who had settled himself in Shinah, and obliged him to remove into Assyria, whilst himself seized on Babylon, which, after having repaired and greatly enlarged, he made the metropolis of his kingdom.

The city of Babylon being the capital of Nimrod's empire, its antiquity is not to be questioned; and, indeed, profane authors themselves, who knew nothing of the scriptures, make the son of Belus, whom they will have to be the founder of Babylon, to have lived two thousand years before Semiramis. Marsham brings down the foundation of this city so late as the time of Nabonassar: but the opinion most generally followed, and best grounded is, that Nimrod founded it, Belus enlarged it, and Semiramis added so many great works and otherwise adorned it, that she might not improperly be called the foundress of it; but Nebuchadnezzar was the person who put the finishing hand to it, and made it one of the great wonders of the world. Herodotus hath described it nearly in the following words: "The whole city, says he, which stood on a large plain, consisted properly of two parts, which were divided by the river Euphrates. The walls were every way prodigious: they were in thickness 87 feet, in height 350, and in compass 480 furlongs: these walls were drawn round the city in form of an exact square; they were surrounded on the outside with a vast ditch full of water, and lined with bricks on both sides. In every side of this great square were twenty five gates, that is, an hundred in all, which were made of solid brass; between every two gates there were three towers, and four men at the four corners, and three between each of these corners and the next gate on either side; so that the whole number of streets were fifty, each fifteen miles long, whereof twenty-five went one way, and twenty-five the other, directly crossing each other at right angles; besides these there were also four half streets, which had houses only on one side, and the wall on the other: these went round the four sides of the city next the walls, and were each of them 200 feet broad, and the rest about 150. By these streets thus crossing each other, the whole city was cut into 676 squares, each of which was four furlongs and a half on every side. Round these squares, on every side towards the streets, stood the houses. The space within the middle of each square was all void ground, employed for yards, gardens, and other uses. A branch of the river Euphrates ran across the city from the north to the south side; on each side of the river was a quay, and a high wall of the same thickness with those of the city. In these walls, over against every street that led to the river, were gates of brass, and from them descents by steps to the river. The bridge was not inferior to any of the other buildings, either in beauty or magnificence: and before it was begun to be built, they turned the course of the river Euphrates, and laid its channel dry, as well for the purpose of laying the foundation more conveniently, as to raise artificial banks on both sides the river, to secure the country from those annual inundations, whereby it overflowed its banks in like

manner as the Nile does in Egypt. The river being turned out of its course to facilitate these works, was received into a prodigious artificial lake, dug for that purpose to the west of Babylon. The lake was fifty-two miles square, and fifty-five deep, according to Herodotus, and seventy-five according to Megasthenes. Into this lake was the whole river turned by an artificial canal, till all the work was finished. But that the Euphrates might not overflow the city through the gates on its side, this lake, with the canal from the river, was still preserved. At the two ends of the bridge were two palaces, which had a communication with each other by a vault built under the channel of the river: the old palace which stood on the east side of the river, was sixty furlongs in compass. It was surrounded with three walls, one within another, with some considerable spaces between them. These walls, as also those of the other palace, were embellished with an infinite variety of sculptures, representing all kinds of animals to the life. In this last palace were the hanging gardens, so much celebrated in history: these were of a square form, every side of which was 400 feet long: they were carried up in the air in the manner of several large terraces, one above another, till the height equalled that of the walls of the city. The ascent was from terrace to terrace, by stairs ten feet wide; and the whole pile was sustained by vast arches raised upon other arches, one above another, and strengthened by a wall surrounding it on every side, twenty-two feet thick. On the top of these arches were laid large flat stones, sixteen feet long, and four broad: these were lined with bricks, closely cemented together with plaster, and that covered with sheets of lead, upon which lay the mould of the garden.—Another of the great works of Babylon was the temple of Belus, supposed to be the tower of Babel, built there at the confusion of languages. The richness of this temple in statues, tables, censers, cups, and other sacred vessels, all of massy gold, was immense: among other images, there was one of forty feet high, which weighed 1000 Babylonish talents of gold.

Such were the chief works which rendered Babylon so famous; most of which are, by profane authors, ascribed to Semiramis. From the Assyrians this great and noble city came into the hands of the Persians, and from them into the hands of the Macedonians; and here it was that Alexander the Great died. But not long after his death the city began to decline apace, by the building of Selucia, about forty miles above it, by Seleucus Nicanor, who is said to have erected this city in hatred to the Babylonians, and to have drawn out of Babylon 500,000 persons to people it; so that the antient city was, in the time of Curtius the historian, lessened one fourth part; in the time of Pliny reduced to desolation; in the days of St. Jerome, turned into parks, wherein the kings of Persia were accustomed to hunt; and, according to the relation of some late travellers, only one complete tower remains to mark the place of this once vast and splendid city. So that the remarkable prophecy of Isaiah, respecting it, is now eminently fulfilled; *Wild beasts of the deserts shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and the owls shall dwell there, the satyrs shall dance there, and the wild beasts of the Island shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces.* Isaiah xiii. 17, &c.

* This city is supposed to have been built by Ashur, the son

C H A P. IV.

The Call of Abram. He leaves Haran, goes to the land of Canaan, and afterwards into Egypt. Returns from Egypt, and separates from his nephew Lot. Defeats the army of Chederlao-mer, king of Elam, and thereby rescues Lot from Captivity. Is congratulated on the occasion by the kings of Sodom and Salem. Enters into a covenant with God. Has a son by his maid Hagar. Is promised one by his wife Sarah. Circumcision first instituted.

AT the close of the preceding chapter, we observed that Terah, the father of Abram, left his native place, in order to go into the land of Canaan. It is here to be observed, that his conduct in this respect certainly arose from divine direction, the Almighty having thought proper to select this family out of the rest of mankind, and in them to establish his church, by making Abram, (who was naturally of a righteous disposition) father of the faithful, or worshippers of the true God.

It is evident that God had revealed himself to Abram, previous to his removal from Ur, as appears from the account of the inspired penman, *The Lord had said unto Abram* †, &c. Gen. xii. 1. He had commanded him to leave the country in which he resided, and to travel into another he should point out to him. He likewise promised to make him father of a mighty people, and in him to bless all the families on the earth ‡.

Abram, fully persuaded, in his own mind, of the truth of the divine promise, (though he knew not the difficulties that might attend his removal, nor even the country in which he was to settle) immediately after the decease of his father, prepared himself to go to the land which God should appoint, and, by a strict attention to the divine commands, prove at once his faith and obedience.

Accordingly, taking with him his nephew Lot, his wife Sarai, and the rest of his family, together with all his effects, he set out on his journey, which he prosecuted with all convenient expedition, till he came (by the divine gui-

dance) into the land of Canaan §. Desirous of making some survey of the country, he stopped in the plain || of Moreh, not far from the city of Sichem ¶, then inhabited by the Canaanites. Here he erected an altar, in order to pay his devotions to God, who was so well pleased with his conduct, that he gave him fresh assurances of his favour and protection, and that, in process of time, the whole land in which he then dwelt should be possessed by his descendants.

After staying some time in the plains of Moreh, Abram removed with his family into the more mountainous part of the country, situated between Bethel and Hai. Here he likewise erected an altar, that he might not be deficient in the discharge of that duty which he was conscious of owing to his great and omnipotent benefactor.

From Bethel he proceeded farther to the south; but was interrupted in his progress by a dreadful famine, which raged with great violence throughout the whole country. In consequence of this, he formed the resolution of going to Egypt, that being the only place where relief could be obtained under such calamities *.

Being apprized of the natural libertinism of the Egyptians, Abram was exceeding anxious concerning his wife Sarai, fearing lest her extraordinary beauty might provoke their lascivious attention. Though she was at this time in the 66th year of her age **, yet she still retained those personal charms which, in that country might endanger the life of him who should pass for her husband. After some deliberation,

son of Shem, because Isaiah, speaking of the Chaldeans, says, *This city was not, till the Assyrian founded it*, chap. xxiii. 13. Ur, in Hebrew, signifies *light* or *fire*; and was so called either from the Chaldeans, who first studied astronomy and observed the motions of the heavenly bodies, or from fire, the symbol of the sun, which was worshipped in that city.

† In what manner God revealed himself to Abram the Sacred historian has not told us. It was probably by a voice from the Shechinah, or symbol of the Divine presence; for St. Stephen expressly says, *The God of Glory appeared unto him before he dwelt in Charran*. Acts vii. 2.

‡ St. Paul has very properly explained these words by applying them to a person descended from Abram, whom God designed to make a blessing, or the author of happiness to mankind in general; and this descendant can be no other than our Blessed Redeemer, who, according to the flesh, was descended from Abram, and sent by God to bless all the nations on the earth.

§ The Land of Canaan is situated between the Mediterranean Sea and the mountains of Arabia. It extends from Egypt to Phœnicia, and was first called Canaan, from Canaan, the son of Ham. It was afterwards called Palestine, and the Land of Promise; then of Israel, then Judea, and, lastly, the Holy Land, from its having been the scene of

Our Saviour's actions; and this name it has ever since retained.

|| The Septuagint, and most other versions, call it *the Oak of Moreh*, from a large oak that grew on it; but our translation renders it *plain*.

¶ This city, after the ruin of Samaria by Shalmaneser, was the capital of the Samaritans; and Josephus says, it was still so in the time of Alexander the Great. It was situated ten miles from Shiloh, forty from Jerusalem, and fifty-two from Jericho.

* It appears, from this circumstance, that Egypt had been soon formed into a kingdom after mankind were dispersed by the confusion of languages. Its first name was Mizraim, which signifies *straightness*; it being closed on the north by the Mediterranean Sea, on the west and south by mountains, and on the east by the Red Sea or Indian Gulph. Nicolaus Damascus, a heathen author, says, that Abram went out of Chaldea into Canaan, now called Judea, but, in consequence of a great famine raging there, he removed to Egypt, in which were abundance of all kinds of provisions.

** It may appear somewhat strange that Sarai should have such personal charms at so advanced an age; but it must be remembered that as in those days they were longer lived than at present, so their charms were proportionably durable.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



The PARTING of LOT and ABRAHAM,
after separating their Flocks, &c.

AN ACCURATE MAP
of the
HOLY LAND
with the
ADJACENT COUNTRIES
By Tho^s. Bowen.

beration, Abram concluded that the safest way would be for her to conceal her marriage; upon which, communicating his fears to Sarai, and she approving of his plan; it was mutually agreed between them, that wherever they took up their residence, instead of his wife, she should pass for his sister.

The apprehensions Abram had formed were soon verified, after his arrival in Egypt. The distinguished charms of his wife attracted the notice of several principal Egyptians, and she soon became the subject of popular conversation. The king being informed of her beauty, was excited to gratify his curiosity by the sight of so amiable a stranger. Accordingly, Sarai was, by his order, conducted to court, and placed in the apartments allotted for his concubines. Here she remained several days, during which Abram (her supposed brother) was treated with great civility, and, on her account (though the king had not yet seen her) complimented with many valuable presents.

A feeling mind may, in some degree, conceive the distress each party must naturally be susceptible of on this trying occasion. Sarai was a beautiful woman, in the power of a loose and vicious monarch, and destitute of all protection but from the hands of the Almighty. While her husband, who should be the only guardian of her person, dare not own her as his wife, lest the rage of lust, and strength of power, should deprive him of his existence.

To relieve them from this distressed situation, the Almighty was pleased to interpose in their behalf: and, in order to deter Pharaoh * and his nobles from any dishonourable attempts on Sarai, he suddenly afflicted them with various diseases and bodily infirmities. Not being able to account for this singular circumstance, they at length suspected that it was occasioned by the confinement of Sarai, who, instead of being the sister of Abram, must certainly be his wife. In consequence of these suspicions, the king sent for Abram, and expostulated with him on his misconduct, in having spread a false report, which might have been attended with a breach on his wife's chastity. After saying this he ordered him immediately to quit his kingdom, permitting him to take not only his own effects, but the presents that had been made him in consequence of his supposed sister.

The famine in Canaan, which had occasioned Abram to go into Egypt, was happily ceased; so that his leaving the place was not only in

conformity to the king's command, but agreeable to his own inclinations. Abram directed his course the same way he had come, and on his arrival at Bethel, where he had erected an altar, he offered on it a sacrifice of thanks to God for his happy escape from Egypt, and safe return into the land of Canaan.

Abram and his nephew Lot had hitherto lived, with great unanimity, on the same spot; but their families and possessions being now greatly increased, inconveniences took place. They found themselves particularly distressed for want of provision for their cattle; which, probably, arose partly from the late famine, and partly from the great number of Canaanites, who possessed the most fertile parts of the land. This want of pasture-ground occasioned frequent disputes between the herdsmen of Abram and those of Lot; so that the former, fearing lest the contention which prevailed among the servants, might end in a rupture between themselves, resolved, in a friendly manner, to propose a separation from Lot. In doing this, such was his great prudence and condescension, that, though superior in every respect to his nephew, he gave him his choice of settlement in that part of the country he should best approve. *If, says he, thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or, if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.*

This generous and friendly proposition was readily agreed to by Lot, who, after taking a view of the country, chose the plains near Sodom and Gomorrah, which, being watered by the streams of Jordan †, was not only pleasant, but exceeding fertile.

These matters being adjusted, Abram and Lot parted, the former continuing at Bethel, and the latter retiring to the spot he had chosen for his future residence.

Some time after Lot's departure, the Almighty, ever mindful of his faithful servant Abram, again appeared to him in a vision, and not only renewed the promise he had before made, of enlarging his posterity, but, bidding him cast his eyes round the kingdom, confirmed the gift of all the land which he beheld, to him and his descendants.

These divine assurances were acceptably received by Abram, who, desirous of seeing the different parts of the country promised to his posterity, removed from Bethel, and took up his residence in the plain of Mamre ‡, at a small distance from Hebron §. Here, (as was his usual custom,

* What this king's name was, or indeed any of the Egyptian monarchs, cannot be ascertained. The name *Pharaoh* was a title of dignity common to all, in the same manner as that of *Cæsar* assumed by the Roman Emperors.

† This is the most principal river mentioned in the sacred writings. Its name is supposed to be derived from the Hebrew word *Jor*, which signifies a spring, and *Dan*, a small town situated near its source. From its rise, which is supposed to be at Cæsarea Philippi, it runs through a space of about fifty leagues, and then discharges itself into the Dead Sea, otherwise called the Asphaltite Lake, where the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah once stood. At the distance of about six leagues from its spring, it forms the lake Senachon, from whence it communicates with the lake Tiberias, and passing through it is at length totally lost in the Dead Sea. In summer-time the water is very shallow, but about the time of barley-harvest, or Feast of the Passover,

it generally overflows its banks, and greatly facilitates the fertility of the plain.

‡ This (in like manner with the Plain of Moreh) is, in most versions, rendered *Oak*, and therefore called the *Oak of Mamre*, which name it acquired from a large oak (or as some call it) a turpentine-tree, that grew on the spot. We are told, by an antient writer, that this oak tree, in the time of Constantine, was famous for pilgrimages, as also for the anniversary feast, which was there solemnized. That it was distant from Hebron but six miles, and that, in the neighbourhood, were still to be seen several cottages built by Abram, together with a well, dug by him, to which Jews, Pagans and Christians annually resorted to pay their devotions.

§ The city of Hebron (otherwise called Chebron) was one of the most antient cities in the universe, having been built several years before Tanis, the capital of Lower Egypt.

custom, wherever he pitched his tent) he erected an altar, in order to discharge his religious duties, by offering sacrifices to the Lord.

In a short time after Abram had settled himself at Mamre, by the natural affability of his temper, and the respect shewn him on that account, he acquired the intimacy and friendship of some of the most considerable Canaanites, particularly three, named Mamre, Aner, and Eschol; the former of whom was of such importance as to give name to the country in which he lived.

This alliance was not only agreeable to Abram, but, in the course of time, proved infinitely serviceable, as will appear from the following circumstances. Chederlaomer, king of Elam, had, for some years, held five petty princes (of which number the king of Sodom was one) in a tributary subjection to him. Weary with this subjection, they at length determined to shake off the yoke they had so long borne; to effect which, they confederated together, and joining their respective forces, prepared themselves to march against their oppressor.

The king of Elam being informed of their intentions, resolved, if possible, to frustrate their designs. He accordingly raised a powerful army, and, in conjunction with three other kings, his allies, immediately advanced to meet the enemy. The revolted kings seeing them at a distance, took the field, with a firm resolution of trying the fate of a pitched battle. The place allotted for determining the dispute was the valley of Siddim, which was full of pits of bitumen, or soil of a clayey nature. For some time the victory appeared doubtful; but at length the five tributary kings were put to the rout: one part of their army was entirely cut to pieces, and the other fled to the neighbouring mountains, leaving their cities a prey to the conquerors. Lot, who happened at this time to reside in Sodom, was involved in the calamity of the city, being not only plundered of all his possessions, but carried away among the rest of the captives. One of the soldiers belonging to the vanquished happening to make his escape, immediately hastened to Abram, to whom he related the particulars of the battle, and the hapless fate of his nephew. The faithful patriarch, anxious for Lot, determined to pursue the victors, and, if possible, not only rescue him, but the whole of the captives. He accordingly armed all his own servants, the number of whom amounted to 318, and, accompanied by his three friends and associates, Mamre, Eschol, and Aner, set out in pursuit of the victors, whom, after a march of about seventy leagues, he overtook near Dan. Availing himself of the covert of the night, he put his forces into proper disposition, and immediately charged the enemy on all quarters. So sudden and vigorous an attack on an army

fatigued with a late engagement, and revelling in the spoils of conquest, had the desired effect, for Abram, in a short time, obtained a complete victory. Chadorlaomer, the king of Elam, was, among many others, slain, and his whole army being routed, Abram's victorious party pursued them as far as Hobah, a small place situated near Damascus †. The enemy, from the great consternation into which they had been thrown, by the suddenness of the attack, fled so precipitately, that they left behind them not only the captives, but likewise the booty of which they had possessed themselves. The whole of these fell into the hands of Abram, and among them his nephew Lot, who being thus happily recovered, returned, with all his substance, to his former habitation.

Abram, having, by this conquest, signalled both his valour and fidelity, was highly caressed by those whose cause he had so gallantly espoused. The first person who came to congratulate him on the occasion, was the king of Sodom, who, in thankful acknowledgment of the benefits received from his important services, offered him all his booty which he had retaken belonging to him, desiring only the restoration of those prisoners who were his subjects. But Abram's righteous soul disdained to take advantage of the unfortunate; and therefore, after reserving to his associates that part of the plunder to which their services intitled them, he restored to the king both his subjects and property, evincing, through the whole of his conduct, the most distinguished fidelity, intrepid courage, and inflexible justice.

The next person who congratulated Abram on his success, was Melchizedek *, king of Salem, who, on his return from the battle, accommodated both him and his men with a refreshment of bread and wine which he had provided on the occasion. Being a priest, as well as king, he first blessed Abram for being the instrument of so public a deliverance, and then the Almighty, for having given him such uncommon success: in return for which, the victorious patriarch presented him with the tenth part of the spoils he had taken from the enemy.

As Abram had now acted in the public capacity of a warrior, and might reasonably expect that the kings whom he had routed would recruit their scattered forces, and prepare for a second attack, he was fearful of the consequences. But the Almighty, in order to fortify his mind against all disagreeable apprehensions, even from the most potent princes of the earth, appeared to him in a vision, and informed him that he had undertaken his defence, and would ever reward his faithfulness. *Fear not, says he, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.*

Hitherto the pious patriarch had listened to God's

It was situated on an eminence, twenty miles to the south of Jerusalem, and about the same distance to the north of Beer-sheba. It probably received its name from the word *Chaver*, which signifies *coupling* or *joining*; because these married couples, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah, were all buried there.

† The place here called Damascus was afterwards the capital of Syria. It is now one of the first cities in that part of the world; for, according to Mr. Maundrell, every house has a most beautiful vineyard, where the people regale them-

selves during the heat of the summer. Before the doors are pine-trees, and small streams run through every street. Josephus tells us, this city was built soon after the flood; and, according to the Arabian writers, it was the place where Shem resided till the time of his death.

* Who this extraordinary person was has been a subject of great dispute; but the most rational opinion is, that he was one of the princes of Canaan, who, on account of his great piety and goodness, was called Melchizedek, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *King of Righteousness*.

God's promises without the least shadow of distrust; but, on this fresh assurance he ventured, for the first time, to expostulate with his great protector, not knowing how these things could possibly be accomplished, whilst himself continued without an heir to his body, and that, to all appearance, he must be obliged to leave his substance to Eliezer his steward.

The troubles of Abram, on this head, were soon removed, by the beneficence of the Almighty, who told him, that not his servant, but a son of his own, begotten of his body, should be his heir, and that from him should descend a race as *innumerable as the stars in heaven*.

Abram was so encouraged by this joyful intelligence, that he ventured to beg of God that he would be pleased to give him some sensible token whereby he might be assured of so distinguished a blessing. The Almighty thought proper to comply with his request, and that they might enter into a formal covenant on the occasion, ordered him to take an heifer, a goat, and a ram, each of three years old, together with a pigeon and a turtle dove, and offer them up as a sacrifice †.

The pious patriarch readily obeyed the divine command, and, having killed the beasts, cut them in halves, laying each opposite to the other; but the fowls he left whole. After doing this, he walked between the dissected bodies ‡, making his solemn vows to God of perpetual obedience to his will; and then sat himself down to prevent birds of prey from injuring the sacrifice.

About the time of sun-set Abram fell into a deep sleep, during which it was revealed to him, that he was not to expect an immediate accomplishment of the divine promise; for though himself was to die in peace, and at a good old age, yet his posterity were, after that, to so-

jour and be afflicted, in a strange country, for the space of four hundred years §; after which the Almighty would not only punish their oppressors, but would likewise safely establish them in the land he had promised.

After this revelation Abram soon awoke, and while he was reflecting on what he had heard, the Almighty, in confirmation of the assurances he had given him, and as a ratification of his part of the covenant, caused the symbol of his divine presence to appear before him. It consisted of a *smoking furnace* and a *burning lamp*, which passed between the divided pieces of the victims, and totally consumed them.

Ten years being now elapsed, and the divine promise not yet fulfilled, in giving a son to Abram, Sarai became exceeding uneasy, and imagined, from the course of nature, that her husband's issue must certainly proceed from some other woman. In consequence of this suggestion, she importuned Abram to take her handmaid Hagar, who was an Egyptian, as his secondary wife ||, pleasing herself with the thoughts that, if she should conceive, the child would be reputed hers, and the divine promise would be thereby fully established.

Abram, being prevailed on by the solicitation of his wife, took Hagar to his bed, who, in the proper course of time, found she had conceived. This circumstance produced a material alteration in her conduct; she now threw off the character of the servant, and assuming that of the mistress, treated Sarai with the most insidious contempt. In consequence of this, Sarai complained to her husband, intimating that his fondness for Hagar was probably the occasion of the unworthy treatment she received from her. But the honest patriarch, just in all his dealings, and true to every alliance, would not permit Sarai to be treated with disrespect, and to acquit himself

† A Sacrifice (says a pious and learned divine) is a solemn act of religious worship, which consists of dedicating, devoting or offering up, something animate or inanimate, on an altar, by the hands of a priest, to acknowledge a dependence on, or to conciliate the power of, the Deity. There are five kinds of sacrifices, viz. *Free-will Offerings*, that is, such as are promised before victory and paid after; *First Fruits*, &c. *Expiatory Offerings* to avert anger; *Propitiatory Sacrifices* for success; and *Sacrifices* imposed by command. In the earliest ages sacrifices were exceeding simple:

In antient times to sooth each heav'nly pow'r,
The frugal people offer'd salt and flour;
No vessel yet had stemm'd the raging sea,
Laden with myrrh caught dropping from the tree:
No gums were brought from rich Euphrates shore,
Nor India yet had sent her spicy store.
The Sabine herbs and fruits in smoke aspire,
And the green laurels crackle in the fire.

In process of time different animals were sacrificed, and particular attention was paid to the victim, which was to be free from blemish or defect. Hence the goodliest firstlings of the cattle were chosen, and distinguished for future sacrifices by particular marks.

When she has calv'd, then set the dam aside,
And for the tender progeny provide;
Distinguish all betimes with branding fire,
To note the tribe, the lineage, and the sire:
Whom to reserve for husband of the herd,
Or who shall be to sacrifice prefer'd;
Or whom thou shalt to turn thy glebe allow,
To smooth the furrows, and sustain the plough.

The Hebrews either made *offerings* or *sacrifices*: the first consisted of First-fruits and tithes; and the latter, of slaughtered animals.

The five animals above-mentioned were the only creatures required for sacrifices under the Mosaic dispensation; and it is to be observed, that the Jews fed on no other quadrupeds except the species of the three there enumerated.

The Jewish *Offerings* consisted of grain, meal, bread, cakes, fruits, wine, salt, oil, honey, &c. which were termed *Meat and Drink Offerings*.

‡ The manner of making an alliance, or forming a covenant, at this time was, to divide the victims into two parts, and lay them on two altars opposite each other; after which the contracting parties walked between, which intimated, that the party who violated the covenant should be cut asunder in the same manner as the victim. To this, therefore, we may naturally suppose the circumstance before us to allude, the Almighty chusing to display his mind and will by a plain reference to a custom which at that time prevailed.

§ These years are to be reckoned from the birth of Isaac, who was the seed to whom the promise was made: for, from the birth of Isaac to that of Jacob was 60 years; thence to the birth of Joseph 90; thence to Joseph's death 110; thence to the birth of Moses 60; and in the 80th year of Moses's life the children of Israel came out of Egypt. These years added together make just 400; and although the Egyptian bondage did not continue so long, yet, as the children of Israel had no fixed habitation, so they may be said to have been afflicted during that space of time.

|| In concubinage, these *secondary*, or subordinate wives, were deemed lawful, and their offspring legitimate; but in all other respects they were inferior to the first and principal. As, therefore, they had no authority in domestic affairs before they were concubines, so neither had they after, but were, in every respect, subject to their mistresses.

himself of all suspicion, in giving countenance to Hagar's conduct, invested Sarai with full authority to punish her at discretion. *Behold, thy maid is in thy hand, do to her as it pleaseth thee.*

Sarai having received this licence from her husband, expressed her resentment to Hagar with such severity, that the latter could not digest it. She therefore quitted her master's house, and recommending herself to the protection of God, resolved to make the best of her way to her own country.

As she was travelling over a dreary desert, she came to a spring of water, of which having drank, and being greatly fatigued, she sat down to rest herself. As she was contemplating on her situation, and the circumstances that had occasioned it, she was suddenly interrupted by an angel, who, to impress on her mind a proper sense of her duty, called her by the appellation of *Sarai's maid*, intimating, that though she had been admitted to her master's bed, she was as indispensably subject to the will of her mistress as ever, and therefore highly culpable in not paying her a proper obedience. The angel then asked her the cause of her departure, and the place of her destiny: to which she replied, that she had left her mistress on account of her severe treatment, and that her intentions were to return to Egypt, which was the place of her nativity. On this the angel commanded her to return to her master's house, resume her former employment, and behave with a suitable respect to her mistress. As an encouragement for her to obey these orders, he assured her, that she should have a numerous progeny, and, to convince her of his divine mission, not only told her that he knew of her conception, which was not yet discoverable to the sight, but also gave her precise directions with respect to naming the child. *Thou shalt call his name Ishmael, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.* He likewise informed her, that the descendants of this child

would be a stout and warlike people: that they would live by plunder in the deserts, and be accustomed to annoy others, though not easily vanquished themselves*.

This divine intelligence gave great satisfaction to Hagar, who made not the least hesitation of following the directions of the angel. Though she was an Egyptian, she had imbibed from Abram just notions of the true God, and of the worship due to him from his creatures. As a memento, therefore, of this singular interposition, she called the spring by which she had sat, *Beer-lai bai-roi*, which signifies, *the spring of the living vision*, or, *the spring of him that liveth and seeth me.* Having done this, she immediately left the place, hastened home, and humiliated herself before her mistress; in a short time after which she was delivered of a son, whom Abram, according to the angel's direction, called Ishmael.

At this time Abram was 86 years of age; and, left in the excess of his joy he should mistake this child for the heir of the promises which had been made him, about thirteen years after, the Almighty again appeared to him in a vision, and renewed his former covenant; to ratify which he was pleased to institute the rite of circumcision, by commanding that every male child, of eight days old, whether born in the house, or bought with money, should be circumcised, on the penalty of being cut off from the benefits of the covenant. As a farther mark of his divine respect, he changed our patriarch's name from Abram to Abraham, and his wife's from Sarai to Sarah†; and, to compleat his happiness, again promised that he should yet have a son by her.

Though this promise gave great satisfaction to Abraham, yet his mind was agitated on account of Ishmael, his first-born, for whom he had a most paternal affection. He was suspicious that on the birth of a child by the free wo-

man,

* The words in the text are, *And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him: and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.* A thorough illustration of this passage will shew that this prophecy has been most amply fulfilled, and has so continued even to the present time. The learned Mr. Sale, in his preface to the Alcoran, says, that the Arabians justify, or, at least, attempt to justify, their conduct in robbing, by alledging, that their great predecessor Ishmael was the lawful son of Abram, and that by the intrigues of Sarai, he was turned out destitute. For this reason they say, they have a right to make reprisals upon all others. They live in a continual state of war with all the rest of mankind; and are robbers by profession, both by land and sea. On the other hand, all those who live near them are their enemies; and altho' several attempts have been made to subdue them, yet they have proved ineffectual. The people who travel among them are obliged to go in great bodies, called caravans, amounting to seldom less than a thousand; and during the nights, they are obliged to keep watch, lest they should be robbed and murdered. The great Sesostris, king of Egypt, made several attempts to drive them from the southern provinces; but although he prevented them, for some time, from infesting Egypt, yet he found it impossible to subdue them. Herodotus tells us, that the Persians fought many battles with the Arabians, but could never keep possession of any place that happened to fall into their hands. When Alexander the Great was at Babylon, all the eastern nations sent ambassadors to him, offering to submit to his government, except the Arabians, who disdained the mean submission. This so enraged the haughty conqueror, that he made greater preparations to attack them, than he had done to subdue the Persian empire; from whence we may con-

clude, that they were very formidable enemies. He did not, however, live to put his threats in execution, and those who succeeded him in the east were obliged to attend to their own domestic affairs. They were next invaded by the Romans, and although the great Pompey carried the terror of his name over three parts of the world, yet he was not able to conquer Arabia. Trajan, the emperor, marched against them; but although he reduced a few of their towns, yet he was obliged to relinquish them; so true are the words, *He shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.* In this manner they continued till the time of Mahomet, who gave them a new religion; but except in that single instance, they are just the same (as Dr. Shaw says) that they were three thousand years ago. There is no possibility of keeping them from robbing; for Dr. Shaw, in his journey from Ramah to Jerusalem, was robbed by them, although he had with him a guard of Turkish soldiers. Bishop Pocock confirms the account given by Dr. Shaw; and Mr. Hanway, who was in Persia about thirty years ago, tells us, that they go out in whole tribes every year to rob; for although the Turks are vain enough to call them their vassals, yet the wild Arabs pay no submission to them.

† The difference in the sound of these words is very trifling; but, in the sense, it is considerable. The word *Abram* signifies *high father*; but *Abraham* implies *the father of a great multitude*, as he certainly was according to the Divine promise, *a father of many nations have I made thee.* Gen. xvii. 5.

The word *Sarai* signifies *my princess*, or chief of my family only; but *Sarah* implies, *Princess or chief of multitudes*, according to the words in the text, *She shall be a mother of nations, kings of people shall be of her.* Gen. xvii. 16.

man, he might be deprived of that descended from the bond-woman; and therefore, falling prostrate on the ground, he began to intercede with God, in behalf of Ishmael; O, says he, *that Ishmael might live before thee.* But the Almighty thought proper to remove his fears, by assuring him, that the great blessings in the covenant were not designed for Ishmael, but for a son to be born of Sarah, which should happen within the course of the year, and that his name should be called Isaac. That he might not, however, seem wholly to neglect his request for Ishmael,

he promised to make him a great nation, and the father of twelve princes; but at the same time told him, that the covenant made should only be established in the son begotten of Sarah.

This was the whole substance of the vision; and as soon as it was ended, Abraham delayed not (according to the divine command) to circumcise himself, his son Ishmael, and all the males in his family. And this ordinance the Hebrews have ever since very religiously observed*.

C H A P. V.

The wickedness of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham entertains three angels, from one of whom he receives intimation of God's design to punish the Sodomites. He intercedes in their behalf. Two angels entertained by Lot. The fate of Lot's wife. Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot's incest with his two daughters. Birth of Isaac and expulsion of Ishmael. Abraham forms a league with Abimelech, king of Gerar. Offers up his son Isaac as a sacrifice. Death and burial of Sarah. Isaac's marriage with Rebecca. Death of Abraham.

THE great wealth of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah had introduced luxury, which, as usual, soon produced licentiousness. The fatal consequences of this were, irreverence to God, inhospitality to strangers, and the indulgence of the most abominable vices. These enormities highly offended the Almighty, who, in order to punish the people, denounced his vengeance both against them and their country. But, previous to the execution of the fatal sentence, he thought proper to intimate his intentions to his faithful servant Abraham.

At this time the pious patriarch resided at Mamre; and as he was sitting one day at the door of his tent, he saw, at a distance, three persons, whom he took for travellers. Being naturally of an hospitable disposition, when they came up to him he arose from his seat, and, in a polite manner, asked them to partake of such refreshment as his habitation afforded. His civility being accepted, an entertainment was immediately prepared for the unknown guests, which being set before them, they, to all appearance, seemed to eat. While they were at table, one of them enquired after Sarah, and being told she was in the tent, he then addressed himself to Abraham, and assured him, that he had still in remembrance the care of his wife Sarah, who, before the end of the year, should certainly be delivered of a son. From this circumstance Abraham was convinced, that these three visitors were messengers from heaven, and that one of them was the peculiar representative of the Almighty.

Sarah had listened attentively to the discourse that had passed between her husband and his

guests; but considering the advanced age both of herself and him, she regarded not their prediction; and even laughed within herself at the improbability of such an event. This disrespectful behaviour being observed by the stranger, he, in an angry tone, asked her the reason of it. Struck with terror, she attempted to deny it; upon which he dismissed her with this gentle reproof: that it was exceedingly wrong in her to mistrust what he had said, since *nothing was impossible with God.*

This finished the conversation, immediately after which the three guests prepared themselves to depart, and Abraham, understanding they were going towards Sodom, courteously offered to attend them some part of the way. As they journeyed together, God was pleased to manifest his peculiar regard to Abraham, in foretelling the dreadful judgment he intended to inflict on Sodom and the neighbouring cities, which instance of his kindness was founded upon an assurance, that he would command not only his children, but his household also, to persevere in the true fear and worship of their divine Creator.

This intelligence was communicated to Abraham by one of the angels, (the immediate representative of God) the other two having gone before with great haste, to reach, as soon as possible, the place of their destiny. So melancholy a piece of news greatly afflicted Abraham, who, from an assurance of the divine favour, ventured to intercede in behalf of those wicked people. Not doubting but the supreme and equitable judge of the earth would listen to mercy, he begged of him not to punish the innocent with the guilty. He made five petitionary

* Several reasons (says a learned author) may be given for the institution of this rite; but the most considerable appear to be the following: The first is topical, taken from the nature of the climate, the heat of which (according to Philo) subjected those, who were not circumcised, to a dis-

temper called the Carbuncle. The second is political; namely, that it was to distinguish those, who were in covenant with God, from other nations. The third reason is of a moral nature; to wit, that it was to imply the circumcision of the heart, and the mortification of carnal appetites.

tionary propositions, lessening the supposed number of pious inhabitants in Sodom, from fifty to ten, earnestly beseeching of God, that, could even so small a number be found, he would, on their account, withdraw his avenging rod, and avert the impending danger. This request being granted, the angel departed, and Abraham returned home, happy in the thought of having received such peculiar manifestations of the divine love.

In the mean time, the two other guests, who went before (and were, indeed, the ministering angels whom God had appointed to execute his judgments on the Sodomites) pursued their journey towards the city, whither they arrived in the evening. Lot happened at this time to be sitting at the gate of the city: as soon, therefore, as he saw the angels, he arose, and, after proper salutations, invited them to his house, in order to refresh themselves. For some time the divine messengers declined the offer; but, at length, from the strength of Lot's importunities, they were prevailed on to accept the invitation.

It being soon rumoured about the city that Lot had strangers with him, great numbers of the vile inhabitants assembled together, and, surrounding the house, commanded him, in a peremptory manner, to deliver them up. Lot thought at first to appease them by mild and soft words; and therefore, stepping out of the house, and shutting the door after him, he begged of them not to offer any insult to his guests, who had committed themselves to his care and protection. This not having the desired effect, in order to appease their rage, and, if possible, to preserve the laws of hospitality inviolate, he offered to give up his two virgin daughters to their discretion. But so abandoned were these wretches to wickedness, and so deaf to every remonstrance, that they even refused this offer, and threatened Lot with very severe treatment, if he did not immediately comply with their request.

Finding Lot was resolute, and totally disregarded their threats, they determined to effect that by force which they could not obtain by any other means. Accordingly, pressing forward, they attempted to break open the door; but the divine messengers prevented their design. By an exertion of supernatural power, they forced their way out of the house, took in their host, and then, shutting the door, struck the rioters with a temporary blindness; so that not being able to find the house, they were obliged to desist from their diabolical intentions.

All things being now quiet, the two angels acquainted Lot with the purport of their embassy. They told him they were come to execute the divine vengeance, on that execrable place and its neighbourhood; and therefore, if he had any friends for whose safety he was con-

cerned, to acquaint them of their danger, that thereby they might escape the general destruction.

In the city were two young men, who had been betrothed to Lot's daughters, to whom he immediately repaired, and informed them of the approaching event, at the same time advising them, for their safety, to leave the place, and go with him; but, instead of listening to his advice, they totally despised it, and profanely ridiculed the idea of the threatened destruction.

In the morning, soon after day-light, one of the angels, observing Lot not to prepare for his departure with that expedition he knew to be necessary, rather chastised him for his conduct. The cause of his delay certainly arose from hopes that the dreadful sentence against those wretched people might be reversed; but his hopes were in vain, for, instead of ten righteous persons, that Abraham had capitulated for, no more than four, and all those of Lot's family (himself included) were appointed to escape the dreadful judgment. Knowing, therefore, the necessity of immediate departure, the angel took Lot, his wife, and his two daughters by the hands, and conducted them out of the city. The Divine messenger told him to make all the expedition possible, and, to avoid the common ruin, pursue his course to the neighbouring mountains.

Lot, observing the mountains to which he was directed were at a considerable distance, began to despair of reaching them in proper time, and therefore entreated the angel that he might be permitted to escape to a small city, not far from Sodom, then called Bela, but afterwards Zoar. This request was granted, and that city, on their account, escaped the general destruction. Before the angel left them, he urged them to make all possible haste, as the Divine commission could not be put in execution till they were safely arrived at the place of their destination. He likewise enjoined them not, upon any account whatever, to look behind them, but to keep their eyes fixed on the place allotted for their refuge.

Having said this the angel departed, and Lot with his family, pursued their journey towards Zoar. After travelling some way, Lot's wife, either from forgetfulness of the prohibition, or out of respect to the place of her habitation, indiscreetly looked back. This misconduct was attended with the most fatal consequences: she was immediately turned into a pillar of salt §, and became a standing monument of the vengeance of the Almighty on disobedient and obstinate offenders.

Lot and his daughters, strictly observing the Divine injunction, hastened towards Zoar, whither they had no sooner arrived, than the vengeance of the Almighty began to appear in all its horrors. The angry heavens poured down showers of liquid fire || on Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other wicked cities of the plain; and in a short time

§ It is to be observed that the *pillar of salt* into which it is said the wife of Lot (who was probably struck suddenly dead) was turned, was not of the common, but *metallic* kind, which, according to the testimony of several eminent writers, was hewn out of the rocks like marble, and raised to perpetuate this singular circumstance. The expression, therefore, *pillar of salt* must not be considered *literally*, but

metaphorically, in the same manner as a firm and sure covenant is called, a *covenant of salt*. Num. xviii. 19.

|| The storm of thunder and lightning, or of liquid fire, which destroyed these cities, is supposed to have been attended with a dreadful earthquake, because the adjacent country was afterwards turned into the lake, now called the Salt or Dead Sea.

time the whole was reduced to a state of irreparable destruction.

When Lot beheld the dreadful calamity that had befallen the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, he began to think himself not safe in Zoar; he therefore withdrew to the mountains to which he was first directed, and, for want of a proper habitation, lived, for some time, with his daughters, in a cave. The two young women imagined themselves and father were the only remnants of the human species, and fancied any means that could be adapted to preserve the race of mankind were justifiable. Excusing their conduct by such ideas, they concerted a plan for seducing their innocent father, and through him to have issue, that might (as they thought) replenish the earth. But as they knew, from his virtuous disposition, that so long as he retained his reason they could not effect their purposes, they resolved to divest him of that sensation; and, accordingly, under pretence of its being serviceable, supplied him with such a quantity of wine, that he became intoxicated, and, consequently, insensible of the transaction that followed.

Being thus circumstanced, the oldest daughter, who was most forward in promoting the design, went first to bed to him, and, from his great insensibility, the unjustifiable act was committed without his knowledge. The same artifice being repeated the following night, the youngest daughter supplied the place of the eldest, and the same consequence ensued. Each of these females had a son from this illegal commerce; the offspring of the elder was called Moab, and that of the younger Ammon; and from these descended the Moabites and Ammonites, who, in after-times, were bitter enemies to the house of Israel.

As sacred history is silent, after this circumstance, concerning Lot and his daughters, we now proceed to consider the peculiar dispensation of Providence with respect to his faithful servant Abraham.

At the time of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the pious patriarch resided at Mamre; but as soon as he beheld that fatal catastrophe, struck with a proper sense of the Divine vengeance, and the great power he had over his creatures, he removed from thence to the southward, and took up his residence in Gerar*, one of the principal cities in Palestine.

On his first entering this place, he had recourse to the same policy he had before practised when in Egypt, and an agreement was made between him and his wife that they should pass for brother and sister. Abimelech†, the king of Gerar, supposing this to be their real affinity, and being captivated with the person of Sarah, who, though far advanced in years, possessed some distinguished charms, ordered her to be brought to his palace, with an intent of making her his concubine. But the Almighty warned him in a dream from committing the iniquitous act, by

assuring him, that if he took to his bed a woman, whose husband was a prophet, his conduct should be punished with immediate death.

In consequence of this Abimelech sent for Abraham, whom he severely reprimanded for having endeavoured to impose on him, by calling her his sister whom he knew to be his wife. In excuse for the fiction Abraham alledged he did it for his own safety, being apprehensive that had it been known she was his wife, he might, in order to possess her, have robbed him of his existence. He farther said, that the report he had given of her being his sister was not, in fact, a falsity, for though she was not born of the same woman, yet she was begot by the same man.

This apology pacified the king, who not only restored Abraham his wife, but also gave him many valuable presents, with full permission to settle himself in any part of his dominions.

The Almighty had not only threatened the king with death should he violate the chastity of Sarah, but also afflicted him and all the women belonging to him with a kind of impotence. Abraham, therefore, in return for Abimelech's civility, prayed to God to remove these imperfections, which he being pleased to grant, the king's disability left him, and the queen, with the rest of the women belonging to him, were restored to their natural fertility.

Soon after this the Divine promise (made by the Almighty to Abraham) was fulfilled. The time appointed was now elapsed, and Sarah brought forth a son, whom Abraham, agreeable to the sacred injunction, called Isaac‡; and on the eighth day he was circumcised.

Sarah having long considered Ishmael as the presumptive heir of her family, had reared and continued to treat him with the most affectionate tenderness. But on the birth of Isaac she became apprehensive with respect to his inheritance, imagining, that in case of Abraham's death, Ishmael's superiority of years would give him every advantage over her own son. Stimulated by such fears, she resolved to get rid of Ishmael, and it was not long before an opportunity offered for accomplishing her design.

Though Sarah was far advanced in life (being now upwards of ninety years old) yet, by the Divine power, nature was compleatly perfect. She was bountifully supplied with food for her infant son, whom she suckled herself, and at the usual time weaned him. On this joyful occasion Abraham made a great feast, in the height of which Sarah observed that Ishmael treated her son with derision and contempt. Enraged at this circumstance, as soon as the guests were gone, she communicated the particulars to her husband, and importuned him to turn both Ishmael and his mother from their habitation, intimating, that the son of a bond-woman had no title to that heirship which solely belonged to her son Isaac.

The

* The city of Gerar was situated not far from the angle where the south and west sides of Palestine met; and the country to which it gave name extended a considerable way into Arabia Petrea.

† The kings of Gerar were generally called by the title

of Abimelech, in the same manner as those of Egypt were called by that of Pharaoh.

‡ The word *Isaac* implies *laughter*, and alludes to the *smile of disbelief* which appeared in Sarah's countenance when the angel informed her that she should become pregnant.

The good old patriarch now found himself in a very intricate situation. He loved Ishmael, and was loth to part with him. Not knowing, therefore, in what manner to proceed on so trying an occasion, he applied himself to God, who was pleased to confirm what Sarah had requested. At the same time the Almighty promised Abraham that he would make Ishmael (because he was his son) a populous nation, though his portion and inheritance was not to be in that land which was all along designed for the descendants of Isaac.

Thus was it determined, by the Divine appointment, that Hagar should once more become a wanderer; nor could the fondness of Abraham for his son Ishmael prevent her fate: it was the Lord's command, nor durst the patriarch refuse to obey.

Early in the morning, therefore, Abraham, calling Hagar to him, told her she must leave his house, and that her son must be the partner of her banishment. Hagar was of course greatly surprized at this sudden command, but finding her master absolute, she was obliged to submit. That she might not be distressed for want of proper refreshment, he supplied her with a quantity of provisions, together with a large bottle of water, having done which he gave her a final dismissal.

After travelling some days in the dreary wilderness of Beersheba, her provisions grew short, and her bottle of water was quite exhausted. It unfortunately happened that Ishmael was at this time in a high fever, and Hagar not being able to get water to quench his thirst, there were little hopes of his existing much longer. Thus distressed, she knew not what to do, but at length, to shelter her son, in some degree from the violent heat of the weather, she placed him under a tree, and retired at some distance, that she might not be a spectator of the dying pangs of her beloved Ishmael.

A melancholy scene now took place: the feeble tongue of the child begged relief from its tender parent, whose woes were doubled by her inability to give it the least assistance: his pressing demands could only be answered by a flow of tears, and the only prospect before them was, despair and death. But the ears of boundless mercy are ever open to the cries of distress, and the Lord of Omnipotence is ever ready to relieve the indigent.

§ It must not be imagined that this wilderness was quite an uninhabited desert; for there were houses, and even villages scattered about it; but being a mountainous tract, and on that account less inhabited than other parts of the country, it was called a wilderness.

|| The names of these sons were as follow: Nabajoth, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphith, and Kedemah, *twelve princes according to their nations.* Gen. xxv. 13, &c.

* It may, perhaps, at first view, appear strange that a dispute of any consequence should have arisen on account of a well of water; but it must be remembered, that in those hot and dry countries, a well of water was an inestimable treasure, and the digging it a work of prodigious labour, which arose from the rockiness of the soil, and the great depth it was necessary to dig before they could find a spring.

† The word *Beer*, in the Hebrew language, signifies a well, and *Sheba*, an oath, so that the Jews called it the *Well of the Oath*; because of the oath that Abraham and Abimelech had made at that place.

While Hagar was lamenting her direful situation, a Divine agent appeared before her, and, for their present relief, directed her to a well of water which she had not before perceived. Having filled the bottle, she gave some of the water to Ishmael, who was greatly refreshed with it, and, in a few days, so far recovered from his illness as to be able, with his mother, to pursue their journey. Hagar's intentions were, at first, to have gone into Egypt, but she now altered her mind, and fixed her abode in the wilderness § of Paran, where Ishmael (whose health and strength were now greatly increased) in a short time, became so expert an archer, that he was able to obtain a sufficiency of provisions both for himself and mother.

When Ishmael grew up to the years of maturity, his mother, who was an Egyptian, married him to a woman of her own country. By this woman he had twelve sons ||, whose descendants dispersed themselves in that part of the country situated between Havilah and Shur, that is, in several parts of Arabia Petraea, the western part whereof, towards Egypt, is, in scripture, called Shur; and the eastern part, towards the Persian Gulph, Havilah.

In the mean time Abraham continued to reside in the land of Palestine; and as his riches and power every day increased, Abimelech grew jealous of him, being fearful that he might, some time or other, endeavour to supplant him in the government. To prevent this, by the advice of his general Phicol, he formed a solemn league of friendship with Abraham, and thereby removed those fears which, for some time, had given him great uneasiness. A dispute had arisen between the servants of Abimelech and those of Abraham, relative to a well, which the latter had dug; but after a proper explanation, the matter was adjusted to the satisfaction of all parties, the well being declared the property of Abraham*.

The place where Abimelech and Abraham entered into this solemn covenant was, from thenceforth, called Beersheba †. Here Abraham, intending to end his days, should it be the will of Providence for him so to do, planted a grove ‡ for a place of worship, and in it erected an altar, that he might not be any ways deficient in the discharge of his religious duties.

The Almighty, in his wise Providence, had, in divers instances, and on many occasions §§, put Abraham's faith and obedience to the test; but
now

‡ Groves are certainly very proper places for retirement, the silence and natural gloom which reigns in them disposing the mind to be serious and contemplative. Hence they were chosen by the pious fathers of antiquity, as their temples and solemn theatres of devotion.

§§ The Jews reckon up ten trials of Abraham, of which they consider this as the most distinguished. These trials are as follow:

1. God's Command to him to leave his country.
2. The Famine, that forced him to go into Egypt.
3. The king of Egypt taking his wife from him.
4. His war with the four kings.
5. His despair of having Isaac by Sarah, and, on that account, taking Hagar.
6. His Circumcision in his old age.
7. His wife being taken from him by Abimelech.
8. The expulsion of Hagar when she was with child by him.
9. His expulsion of her and Ishmael. And
10. His intended oblation of his only son Isaac.

now he resolved to try him in the tenderest point, in which every tie of parental affection bound him, and to give up which required a degree of resignation uncommon to the best of men. He is required, by his God, to sacrifice his son — to embrace his hands in the blood of his darling offspring.

Ishmael was now no more to him; he had parted with him at the divine command, and had transferred his affections solely on Isaac; and this son, this *only* son, who had been given him by Divine promise, and in whom all his future expectations of happiness centered, must fall a victim by the unalterable decree of heaven. Hard task to flesh and blood! Severe trial to human nature! But if the flesh shuddered, the spirit was absolute: God commands || ---the patriarch obeys.

Early, therefore, the next morning Abraham arose, and, without taking any notice to his family, prepared himself for the appointed business. He sat out, accompanied only by his son Isaac, and attended by two servants, who led an ass laden with provisions, together with the wood, instruments, and other things necessary for the sacrifice. After travelling three days he came within sight of the spot God had appointed for the dreadful scene, which was a particular mountain in the land of Moriah*. Here he ordered his servants to stop with the ass, while he and his son went to a spot at some distance to perform their religious duties.

Abraham having laden his son with the wood and other materials for a burnt offering, they proceeded on their journey. The harmless Isaac, ignorant of the design of his pious and affectionate parent, went cheerfully on with him, and the good old patriarch, relying on the faithfulness of the Divine promise, overcame the strugglings of a natural affection, which might have retarded his compliance with the will of God, and proceeded with a resolution worthy the *father of the faithful*.

As they approached near the appointed place for executing the awful injunction, Isaac, recollecting that a proper victim (the most essential requisite for the sacrifice) was wanting, innocently asked his father, where was the lamb for the burnt offering? Such a question, at such a

time, was enough to have startled any heart less firm than Abraham's; but, fixed in the resolution to obey the divine command, he coolly replied, *My son, God will provide one himself*.

Being now arrived at the spot which the Almighty had directed, the first thing Abraham did was to erect an altar; after which, having prepared the instruments, and laid the wood in order, he embraced his son, and then bound him†. Here the sacred historian, like a great painter, hath drawn a veil over the sorrow of Abraham, and the resignation of Isaac, that the imagination of the reader might paint to him more forcibly the struggles of the parent, and the agonies of the son, than words can possibly express.

Every preparation being now made, Abraham, taking up the knife, stretched forth his hand to give the finishing stroke to the life of his son; when, behold! God is satisfied with the faith and obedience of the father, and the piety and resignation of the son. The voice of a heavenly messenger is suddenly heard, saying unto Abraham, *Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him*. The uplifted arm was now withheld, and the fatal blow happily averted. The Divine sound intimated, that the Almighty neither delighted in human sacrifices, nor wished to make a father the murderer of a son whom he had bestowed on him as a peculiar favour; but that the command had been given to try if his obedience to God exceeded his feelings as a man, and if his natural affections could submit to his religious duties.

When the Divine voice ceased, the pious patriarch, turning his eyes from the dear, though intended victim, beheld a ram fastened by his horns in a thicket. Convinced in his mind that this was the gracious substitute of Providence, he immediately flew to it with raptures, and having slain it with that knife which was intended for the destruction of his son, brought it to the altar and presented it (instead of the before destined Isaac) as a burnt-offering, to his great and benevolent benefactor.

This infallible token of Abraham's obedience was so satisfactory to the Almighty, that he was pleased to renew his gracious promise to him with

|| A material objection has been stated by some relative to this circumstance, which it will be necessary to remove; namely, how Abraham could be satisfied that this command was from God, when it appears inconsistent with the very nature of God, and subversive of morality. Now it must be granted, that Abraham was perfectly well acquainted with the manner of God's appearing to him, and communicating his will. It was in obedience to the command of God, thus signified to him, that he had left his own country and kindred, and retired into a strange land. He was also informed by the same way of extraordinary revelation, that he should have a son by Sarah his wife, though he was an hundred years old, and she ninety, and had been barren all her days; so that Abraham could be no stranger to revelations of this kind, and consequently must know that they came from God. And being convinced of this, he must also be fully satisfied, that a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness could give no command, that would ultimately terminate in calamity upon innocence and obedience; and, therefore, when a command of an intricate and mysterious nature was given him, what had he to do but to obey? He well knew that this very son, whom God demanded, was given him in an extraordinary manner; and why might he not be taken away in a manner as extraordinary? He also knew, that both himself and his son were at God's disposal,

who was supreme Lord of both, and who, as he had a right to demand Isaac's life, had likewise a right to chuse his instrument. And when he was taken away, he still knew that God could again restore him in a manner more extraordinary; whence St. Paul's reflection is a lively comment on the principles of Abraham's obedience on this occasion. *By faith Abraham offered up Isaac; (that is, intentionally) accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead.* Heb. lxi. 17, &c.

* The word *Moriah* signifies *God manifested*, and was so called from God's appearing there to Abraham. It was on this very mountain that the temple of Solomon was built (see 2 Chron. chap. iii. 1.) and on one part of it, namely, Mount Calvary, Our Blessed Saviour offered himself a sacrifice to atone for the sins of mankind; which sacrifice was prefigured by this intentional offering of Isaac.

† It is reasonable to suppose that Abraham had now acquainted his son with the will of God, and persuaded him to submit to it willingly. Isaac was at this time a very stout lad, and consequently had sufficient strength to have resisted the feeble efforts of his aged father. It is, therefore, evident that he submitted voluntarily to his fate—a strong and exact type of Our Blessed Redeemer, who voluntarily laid down his life for the sins of mankind.

with enlarged abundance; and even to confirm the same by a solemn oath. *By myself have I sworn, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.*

Having thus complied with the will of God, and received a most convincing testimony of the Divine approbation, Abraham and Isaac returned to the servants, and they all went joyfully together to Beer-sheba, at that time the place of Abraham's residence. In memory of this singular transaction, the pious patriarch called the place where it happened, *Jehovah-jirah*, in allusion to the answer he gave to his son's question, *God will provide himself a lamb.*

When Abraham returned home, he received the agreeable intelligence of the increase of his family, namely, that Milcah, his brother Nahor's wife, had brought him a numerous issue †. But the joy he received on this account was soon damped, by a circumstance which happened in his own family, namely, the loss of his wife Sarah, who died at Kirjatharba (afterwards called Hebron) in the 127th year of her age.

At the time of Sarah's death, Abraham was at Beer-sheba; but he no sooner heard of the melancholy event, than he immediately repaired to Hebron, in order to perform the last offices due to his departed wife. As he was a stranger in the country, and had no land there of his own, he could not give her honourable interment, without first obtaining the consent of the people §. He therefore addressed himself to a general assembly of the principal inhabitants, intreating them to allow him the liberty of burying his wife in their country. This request being readily granted, Abraham bowed to the assembly in acknowledgment for the favour; after which he told them he should be glad to purchase a piece of ground as a sepulchre for himself and family, and begged of them to entreat Ephron, the prince of the country, to sell him the cave of Machpelah.

This request being likewise granted, and application made to Ephron, he generously offered the patriarch not only the cave, but also the whole field in which it stood, as a burying-place. Abraham acknowledged the bounty of the offer; but as he had ever acted on a principle of strict justice, he desired the prince to fix a price on the field; and that, on such condition, he would take possession of it for the purposes intended.

The prince, finding the patriarch resolute, asked four hundred shekels ¶ (a sum greatly beneath its real value.) The purchase was made before all the people of Hebron, and the field, together with the cave, were formally assigned over to Abraham, and his heirs for ever.

This matter being adjusted, Abraham, after the usual ceremonies of mourning were over, buried his wife in the cave he had then pur-

chased, and in which his own remains were afterwards deposited.

Abraham, being now far advanced in years, and apprehending he had not much longer to live, was desirous of seeing his own son Isaac married, and settled in the world, before his departure out of this transitory life. He therefore called to him his household steward, an old and trusty servant, to whom he related his intention of marrying his son; and obtained from him an oath *, that (in case he died first) he should procure a wife for him among his own kindred, and not from the daughters of the Canaanites. Having obtained this solemn oath, Abraham told his servant to go into Mesopotamia, which was the place of his nativity, and there chuse a wife, out of his own kindred, for his son Isaac. On receiving these orders, the servant asked him this question: "If, says he, the woman refuse to follow me into the Land of Canaan, must I return, and fetch thy son to her?" The patriarch immediately answered in the negative, as no consideration could prevail on him to suffer his son to return to a land, which he himself had left, on account of the inhumanity and idolatry of its inhabitants. To encourage the servant in the prosecution of his intended expedition, Abraham assured him, that a heavenly messenger would conduct him to the place from whence he should bring a wife unto his son; and that if the woman pitched on should refuse to follow him, he should be freed from the oath he had taken, and be considered as having properly discharged the business with which he was entrusted.

These matters being settled, Eliezar, (for that was the name of this trusty servant) set out on his embassy, attended by a number of servants and camels, agreeable to the importance of his business, and the dignity of the person by whom he was employed.

After undergoing great fatigue both from the badness of the roads, and the want of water, this trusty servant, with his attendants, reached Mesopotamia, and repaired to Haran †, a city belonging to his master's brother Nahor. When he had arrived near the entrance of the city, he stopped at the public well (whither it was customary for the young women of the place to come every morning and evening for water) in order to refresh the camels.

Having been properly instructed by his master in the fear of God, and being sensible of the importance of the business, as well as fearful of executing it to his master's satisfaction, he made a mental prayer to God, beseeching him to direct him, by a certain sign, to a proper object of choice for his young master. He had no sooner solicited this divine assistance, than his request was immediately complied with, and the sign given was, that she who, at his desire, permitted him

† The names of the children of Nahor, by Milcah, were as follow: Huz, Buz, Kemuel, Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel. The last of these begat Rebecca, who was afterwards the wife of Isaac.

§ The people who possessed this country were called Hittites, being the descendants of Heth, the son of Canaan, and grandson of Ham.

¶ The sum here mentioned amounted to near 47l. and was given in weight. At this time there was no coin, nor, indeed, for many years after, till convenience taught men to

give money a public stamp, in order to denote its value.

* The common method of taking an oath among the Hebrews, and all the oriental nations, at this time was, for the person who swore to put his hand under the thigh of the person to whom he swore; and the same custom is still preserved in some parts of the East Indies.

† The city of Haran or Charran, was situated between the Euphrates and the river Chabar, at some distance from the spot where the two rivers form a conjunction.

him to drink of her water would be the person appointed by God for the wife of his servant Isaac.

Soon after this, Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, came to the well, with her pitcher, for water; after she had filled it, the servant (having taken notice that she was exceeding beautiful) accosted her in a very humble manner, begging that she would give him a draught of the water, he being exceeding thirsty. Rebecca readily consented, and not only gave him to drink, but also went several times to the well to fetch water for the refreshment of his camels.

This propitious occurrence highly delighted Abraham's servant, who, after paying some general compliments to her beauty and benevolence, made enquiry concerning her family and relations. To which the lovely virgin replied, that she was the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor, and kinswoman to Abraham.

This intelligence gave fresh spirits to the faithful messenger, who was now convinced that God approved of the alliance between Rebecca and Isaac. He, therefore, presented to her a pair of gold ear-rings, and some other female ornaments, requesting her to accept them as a token of his esteem for her virtues, and a grateful return for her distinguished condescension. As it grew late, and he had valuable property about him, he entreated permission, for that night, to reside at the house of her relations. Rebecca, in a most engaging manner, permitted him this convenience, but begged that she might previously apprize the family of so unexpected a visitor. Accordingly, having accepted the presents, she immediately hastened home, leaving Eliezar full of contemplation and acknowledgments to the Divine favour for the happy incident.

As soon as Rebecca entered the house, her brother Laban observing the bracelets on her arms, asked her by what means she had obtained such costly ornaments? Rebecca acquainted him with every particular that had happened from her going out till her return; upon which Laban immediately went to the well, where finding Eliezar and his attendants, he brought them home with him, and ordered proper provision to be made both for him and his retinue.

As soon as Eliezar had paid the necessary compliments to Rebecca's family, he informed them

of the nature of his embassy, the great success that had attended him in his journey, and the fortunate incident of his meeting Rebecca without the city. He likewise gave them an ample account of the state of his master's family; of the wealth and prosperity wherewith God had blessed him: of the son and heir which he had given him in his old age; and of the large expectancies which this heir had, not only from the prerogative of his birth, but from the donation and entail of all his father's possessions. Having thus minutely related every particular relative to his embassy, he demanded an immediate answer, saying, till that was obtained, he could not, with any satisfaction, take the least refreshment.

From the very singular circumstances that had occurred in the course of Eliezar's journey, Laban and Bethuel † were of opinion, that Divine Providence was materially concerned in the whole affair. Concluding, therefore, that it would be exceeding wrong to refuse Eliezar's request, they readily consented, and told him he might take Rebecca to her intended husband as soon as he thought proper.

This business being settled, the trusty servant presented Rebecca with jewels of silver and gold, and fine raiment, which he had brought with him for the purpose.

He likewise gave some considerable presents § to her mother and the rest of the family; and the remainder of the evening was dedicated to mirth and festivity.

Early in the morning, Eliezar being impatient to acquaint his master with the success of his embassy, desired to be dismissed. This request greatly surprized the family, who, influenced by natural affection, desired that Rebecca might be permitted to tarry with them a few days, to take, perhaps, a last farewell. But the diligent and faithful steward would admit of no delay; upon which the matter being referred to Rebecca herself, she agreed to go with him whenever he thought proper. Accordingly, the necessary preparations being made, and the bridal blessing || bestowed, she took her leave, attended by her nurse (whose name was Deborah) and other servants appointed on the occasion.

When Eliezar came within some distance of his master's house, it happened that Isaac was then walking in the fields, meditating * on the

† This Bethuel could not be the father of Rebecca, because, had that been the case, it would have been improper to have had Laban either named before him, or to have given answer to Abraham's messenger when his father was by; and, therefore, since Josephus makes the damsel tell Eliezar that her father had been dead long ago, and that she was left to the care of her brother Laban, this Bethuel (who is here named after Laban, and never more taken notice of during the whole transaction) must have been some younger brother of the family.

§ Dr. Shaw, who resided many years in the east, tells us, that, among the Arabians, the person who settles a marriage contract, first adorns the espoused person with jewels, and then makes presents to her relations, according to their rank. He adds, that on such occasions, it is expressly stipulated what sum of money the husband shall settle on the wife; what jewels she shall wear; how many suits of raiment she shall have; and, lastly, how many slaves shall be allowed to attend her.

|| The words in the text run thus: *And they blessed Rebecca, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mo-*

ther of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those that hate them. They, that is, her mother, brethren, and all the rest of the family and kindred, by way of tender adieu, prayed to God to bless her with a numerous and glorious posterity, which was the greatest blessing they could wish. Mr. Selden observes, that the Jews used this, even before the law, as a form of solemn benediction, when the spouse was taken home to her husband. *Be thou the mother, &c.* that is, Be fruitful in children, and may those children be prosperous and honourable.

* The attitude in which the sacred writer draws Isaac, walking out to meditate, is exceeding beautiful. It has been observed, that a good man, in his evening walk, makes a distinguished figure in the eyes of superior beings. And the example is worthy of imitation; for though it is not good for a man to be too much alone, yet neither is it fit that he should be always in company: he ought sometimes to step aside from the busy scenes of life, and retire within himself. Such solitude, to use the words of Milton, is often best society, and short retirement urges sweet return.

the beauties of nature, and the beneficence of that Being who formed the creation. Seeing at a distance his servants and camels on the road, he hastened to meet them, anxious to know the result of Eliezar's embassy. As he approached near, Rebecca asked who he was, and being informed, she immediately alighted from her camel, threw a veil † over her face, and waited to receive the first compliments of her intended husband.

When Isaac came up to Rebecca, he addressed her with great respect, and immediately conducted her to his mother's tent, which had been previously fitted up for her reception, and designed for her future habitation. A few days after they were joined in wedlock, and Isaac grew so fond of her, that his mind was greatly relieved from that perturbation with which, for three years, it had been loaded, for the loss of his affectionate mother. Such was the pious regard children had for their parents in those days; and such was the amiable example set by Isaac for all who should follow!

Some time after Isaac's marriage, his father, though far advanced in life, yet still possessing

great strength of constitution, made an addition to his family, by taking another wife, whose name was Keturah, and by whom he had six sons. But, lest they should interfere with Isaac in his inheritance of Canaan, as they grew up he portioned them off, and sent them towards the east, where, settling in Arabia and Syria, they became, in time, the rulers of different nations.

These are the last circumstances mentioned by the sacred historian, relative to the great patriarch Abraham, who, at length, worn out with bodily infirmities, quietly gave up the ghost, in the 175th year of his age ‡, leaving behind him a name famous to all posterity. He was buried by his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, in the cave of Machpelah, where, about forty years before, he had deposited the remains of his beloved Sarah §.

Ishmael, the eldest son of Abraham, though not his heir, lived many years after his father. He died at the age of 107, leaving behind him twelve sons, who, as had been foretold, became princes of different nations.

C H A P. VI.

The birth of Esau and Jacob. Esau sells his birth-right. Isaac removes to Gerar. Is ill-treated by the Philistines. Returns to Beersheba, and there enters into a covenant with king Abimelech. Jacob, by stratagem, obtains his father's blessing, instead of Esau. Flees to his relations at Haran, to avoid his brother, who determines on revenge for having deceived him. Jacob's vision and vow. Is entertained by his uncle Laban, who afterwards deceives him. Marries Leah and Rachel, the daughters of Laban. Birth of Joseph. Jacob, by a very singular scheme, becomes exceeding wealthy. Leaves his uncle, and returns to Canaan. Is overtaken by Laban, and enters into a covenant with him. Wrestles with an angel. Is kindly received by his brother. The rape of Dinah, and cruelty of her brothers on the occasion. Jacob removes to Bethel. Rachel, his favourite wife, dies in child-bed. Death of Isaac.

WHEN Isaac married Rebecca, he was forty years old, and lived with her near twenty years before she had issue. He had been so long uneasy on this account, that he at length prayed to God to grant him an heir, who being pleased to listen to his request, bestowed that blessing he had so earnestly wished for, and the long barren Rebecca now conceived, to the great satisfaction both of herself and husband.

After Rebecca had been pregnant some months, the struggles of the children (for she had twins within her) gave her such pain and uneasiness,

that she began, in a manner, to wish herself not with child. Unable to account for the cause of her extreme pains, she went to consult the Divine oracle, and received for answer, that the two children, which she then bore, should be the heads of two different nations, and that they would long contest for superiority; but that, in process of time, the glories acquired by the elder would be eclipsed by the more resplendent transactions of the younger ||.

When the time of Rebecca's delivery arrived, the child that first entered the world was covered all

† It was the custom among the women of the east to wear veils when they went abroad; but this action of Rebecca's seems to have been done in conformity to the custom of all brides, who covered themselves with the nuptial veil when they were first introduced to their husbands.

‡ The words in the text are, *He died in a good old age; an old man, and full of years.* The expression *full of years* is a metaphor, and probably taken from an entertainment, when the guests, after having fared liberally, rise from the table fully satisfied, and thankful for the feast. The Greek and Latin poets have thus applied it; and, after them, Mr. Pope, in one of his epitaphs, says,

From nature's temperate feast rose satisfied,
Thank'd heav'n that he had liv'd, and that he dy'd.

§ The death of Abraham is here mentioned by the sacred historian somewhat out of time, Jacob and Esau, the two sons of Isaac, being born fifteen years before the death of their grandfather: but this was probably done by Moses in order to finish the life of the patriarch without interruption. Isaac was born when his father was an hundred years old, and was married when he was 140. It was twenty years after before his wife bore him any children. Abraham died at the age of 175; so that it is clearly evident he lived fifteen years after the births of Esau and Jacob.

|| The words in the text are, *Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.* In this prophecy there are several things worthy of particular notice. First, that the children

all over with red hair *, for which reason his parents called him Esau; and the other came so close after him, that he took hold of his heel with his hand, and was therefore called Jacob, to denote (what he afterwards proved) the supplanter of his brother.

As these two children grew up, they became very different in their tempers, and when they arrived at the age of maturity, followed different employments. Esau, the elder, being strong and active, delighted in the chase, and thereby frequently supplying his father with venison, obtained his particular affection; while Jacob, who was of a more courteous disposition, by staying at home in the tent, and employing himself in family offices, became the favourite of his mother.

Esau having one day greatly fatigued himself with hunting, returned home just at the time his brother Jacob had prepared a mess of pottage † for his own refreshment. Esau, being almost spent with hunger, was so struck with the looks of the pottage, that he anxiously begged of his brother to let him participate of the repast. But Jacob (who was probably so instructed by his mother) refused to comply with his request, unless on the following conditions; namely, that he would immediately make over to him his birth-right. Esau reflecting on the danger to which he was daily subject, from the nature of his employment, set no great value on what Jacob required; and the latter, perceiving his disposition to comply (that he might have the right more firmly conveyed to him) proposed his doing it by way of oath. Notwithstanding the singularity of the request, Esau complied with it, and the bargain being made, he eat very greedily of the food prepared by his brother. Thus did the unthinking Esau dispose of his birth-right, with all the privileges ‡ belonging to it, for so simple a thing as a mess of pottage.

children of Esau and Jacob should grow up into two different nations. The Jews, in all their various tribes, were the descendants of Jacob, and the Edomites, or Idumeans, were the descendants of Esau; and surely none but an infinite wise God could foresee and foretell that two children yet in the womb of their mother, would multiply into two great nations. Secondly, it is here said, that the elder should serve the younger; and all this happened in the same manner as was foretold. At first, the family of Esau, or Edom, was much the greatest and the most numerous; for they had kings long before there were any in Israel. David was the first who subdued them so as to make them pay tribute; and in that instance, the prophecy was literally fulfilled. In that state of servitude they continued 150 years, during which time they had no king, but were governed by deputies appointed by the kings of Judah. It is true they revolted several times, but were again subdued; till at last they were totally conquered, and all their cities taken by Hyrcanus, who obliged them either to become profelytes to the Jewish religion, or to leave their native country.

* This expression, according to some commentators, is taken two ways, namely, either that Esau was, at his birth, covered with red hair, or that the colour of his skin was red, like a coat of red hair. He was called Esau, from the word *Eshau*, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies an *hair-cloth*; as Jacob was named from *Hekel*, the *heel*, and signifies a supplanter, or one that taketh hold of, or trippeth up another's heels.

† This pottage was red, and made of lentils from Egypt, a food highly prized at this period. By Esau's asking his brother for it with so much eagerness, saying (as expressed in the text) *give me that red*, some suppose he knew not what it was; while others conceive that it only expresses the im-

Isaac, at this time, lived at Beersheba, but a dreadful famine happened in the land of Canaan, he resolved (as his father Abraham had done on a similar occasion) to avoid its consequences by retiring to Egypt. He accordingly proceeded as far as Gerar, a city belonging to the Philistines. But here he was interrupted in his intended journey by the interposition of the Almighty, who, in a dream, charged him not to go into Egypt, but to tarry in the country where he then was; and at the same time assured him, that he would not only secure him from the danger of the famine, but, in performance of the oath which he had sworn to his father Abraham, would cause his descendants (to whom he would give the whole land of Canaan in possession) to multiply exceedingly.

In conformity to the Divine command, Isaac determined to fix his residence at Gerar, where he made use of the same stratagem his father had formerly done in the same place, and from the same motive. Fearful lest the charms of his wife Rebecca might attract the particular notice of some of the city, and thereby endanger his own safety, it was agreed between them, that, instead of his wife, she should pass for his sister. This deception succeeded for a time, but at length was discovered by Abimelech § the king, who, from a window, observed such familiarities pass between them, as convinced him they were man and wife.

In consequence of this discovery, Abimelech sent for Isaac, whom he accused of dissimulation, telling him, that from the freedom he had observed between him and Rebecca, he was sure she was his wife; and that the imposition he had endeavoured to lay on the people might have been attended with consequences disgraceful to himself.

Isaac, conscious of the justness of the accusation, did not attempt to disprove the charge, but

patience of gratifying his appetite. He was, however, from this circumstance, afterwards called Edom, which in the Hebrew language, signifies *red*.

‡ The rights and privileges at this time attached to primogeniture were as follow: 1. Pre-eminence over the rest of the family. 2. A double portion of the paternal inheritance. 3. The priesthood. And, 4. The paternal blessing, the blessing which contained the promise of the seed, in which all nations of the earth were to be blessed; privileges not confined to the person himself, but descending to his posterity. Whatever doubt there may be among some concerning the former privileges, the latter incontestably belonged to the birth-right; and in this view there wants no farther proof of the great indiscretion (not to say profaneness) of Esau, in thus disposing of so valuable a possession for so insignificant a purchase.

We must not pass over this circumstance, without taking some notice of the conduct of Jacob, who, however pious in other instances, is certainly, in this particular, not to be justified. He ought not to have taken advantage of his brother's necessity, and when he found him offering to sell the privileges of his birth-right, it was his duty to have dissuaded him from it. It is, therefore, remarkable, that although God had determined to confine his spiritual covenant to the Israelites, and to prefer them, in many things, to the Edomites, yet Jacob himself enjoyed no personal advantage, with respect to temporal things, above Esau.

§ This Abimelech was probably the son of him with whom Abraham had formerly made a covenant. It is reasonable to suppose that Abimelech was only a title commonly used for the kings of the Philistines, in the same manner as Cæsar was by the Roman Emperors, and Pharaoh for the kings of Egypt.

but urged, in vindication of his conduct, that he did it to preserve that life, which, otherwise, he thought in the most imminent danger. This apology was admitted by Abimelech, who not only forgave him the offence, but immediately issued an edict, that whoever should presume to offer any injury either to him or his wife, should be punished with death.

Having received these tokens of friendship from Abimelech, Isaac thought himself happy under his protection, and, intending to make Gerar his fixed place of residence, employed himself in husbandry, and the rearing of flocks, for the future support of himself and family. The great success that attended his endeavours, by means of his beneficent Creator, soon raised the envy and indignation of the Philistines. In the space of one year only, during his residence at Gerar, so prolific was the land he sowed that, to the great astonishment of his neighbours, it yielded him an hundred fold.

This so irritated the Philistines, that, in order to oblige him to leave the country, they filled up the wells which had been formerly dug by his father's servants; and Abimelech himself, to satisfy the resentment of the people, ordered him to quit Gerar, telling him, that as he had sufficiently improved his fortune under his protection, he might now give the like opportunity to others, by leaving the place, and retiring to a more distant part of the country.

Finding to what a degree the people were incensed against him, Isaac, to preserve his property, as well as secure his person, left the place, and retired to the Valley of Gerar, which was at some distance from the city, and where Abraham had formerly fed his cattle. Having settled himself here, he opened the wells (which had been dug by his father and filled up by the Philistines) and called them by their antient names. In the course of their labours, Isaac's servants discovered a new well of fine springing water; but a dispute arising between them and some neighbouring herdsmen, the latter claiming the well as found upon their ground, Isaac resolved to leave the place; and by way of perpetuating the circumstance called it *Esek*, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *contention*. Removing some way farther Isaac's servants dug another well, which being likewise claimed by the Philistines, he was obliged to relinquish it, and therefore called the place *Sitnah*, which signifies *enmity*.

Being quite tired out with repeated insults from the Philistines, in order to prevent the like in future, he removed to the most distant part of their country. Here he dug another well; and not meeting with any opposition, he called it *Rekoboah*, which signifies *enlargement*, because his flocks had now room to feed and range the country in search of fresh pasturage: *for now, said he, the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.*

After residing a short time on this spot Isaac returned to Beersheba, where, on the very night of his arrival, the Almighty was pleased to appear to him in a vision, promising him his favour and protection, and that he would bless him, and multiply his seed, for the sake of his

faithful servant Abraham. In grateful acknowledgment of this repeated instance of the Divine goodness, Isaac, intending to continue here, first built an altar for religious worship, and then ordered his servants to clear out the well which had been formerly dug by his father.

Isaac had not long returned to Beersheba, when Abimelech, touched with a sense of the unworthy treatment he had received, both from him and his subjects, as well as fearing his just resentment, should he become powerful hereafter, thought it most prudent to avoid future trouble, by endeavouring either to renew the old league which had been formerly made with his father Abraham, or to enter into a new one. Accordingly, taking with him the chief of his nobility, together with the captain-general of his forces, he went, in great pomp, to Beersheba, in order to pay honour and respect to Isaac. At the first interview Isaac, to shew that he still retained a sense of the injuries he had formerly done him, received his visit very coolly, and, with apparent surprize, asked, how he came to offer respect to a person, for whom, by his conduct and behaviour, he had long discovered an utter aversion? Abimelech, conscious of his error, made the best excuse the nature of the case would admit. He told him he had long been convinced, that the Divine favour attended him in all his undertakings, and that he might not be thought to oppose God, he was come to renew the covenant between his people and Abraham's posterity, and was ready to engage in the same conditions and obligations.

Isaac, being naturally of a quiet and easy disposition, readily admitted this apology from Abimelech, whom, with his attendants, he entertained with great liberality. The articles for a treaty of friendship were agreed on that same evening, and the next morning confirmed by a solemn and mutual oath; after which Abimelech took his leave, and returned home.

Soon after the departure of Abimelech, the servants of Isaac informed him, that, in the well they had been clearing out, and which formerly belonged to Abraham, they had found a spring of most excellent water. This event happening on the same day that the league of friendship had been confirmed between Isaac and Abimelech, he called it (as his father had done before on a similar occasion) *Beersheba*, *the well of the oath*, "i. e. the well wherein water was delivered, on the day that Abimelech and I entered into a treaty of peace, and ratified the same with the solemnity of an oath."

A circumstance now occurred, which gave great uneasiness both to Isaac and his wife. Their two sons were arrived at the age of forty, and Esau had taken two wives from among the Hittites, one of whom was Judith, the daughter of Beeri, and the other Basemath, the daughter of Elon, both women of respectable families in Canaan. These marriages he had contracted without his parents privity, knowing that his father had determined not to form any alliance with the idolatrous Canaanites. Rebecca was so incensed at Esau's conduct, that the little affection she before had for him, was now entirely alienated; but such was the power of natural affection in Isaac, and such his over-fondness for an

an obdurate and perverse son, that knowing the error past repair, he made a virtue of necessity, and forgave what he could not remedy.

Isaac, becoming very old *, imperfect in his eye-sight, and apprehensive that his dissolution was near at hand, resolved to bestow that parental benediction on his son Esau, which he had long intended. Accordingly, calling him one day to his private apartment, he first related the occasion of his sending for him, and then desired him to take his hunting instruments, go into the fields, kill some venison †, and dress it to his palate, that his spirits might be refreshed, and his mind properly disposed, for giving him that solemn blessing which should crown his future prosperity.

While Isaac was relating his intentions to Esau, Rebecca had so planted herself as to hear all that passed. She, therefore, determined, if possible, to deprive him of the intended blessing, and, by stratagem, get it conferred on her favourite son Jacob. As soon, therefore, as Esau was well gone, Rebecca, calling her son Jacob, told him what she had heard, namely, that his father was going to bestow a benediction, which was final and irrevocable, on his brother; but that, if he would listen to, and follow her directions, she doubted not of getting the honour bestowed on him.

Jacob, promising to pay a strict obedience to whatever his mother should command, she ordered him to go immediately to the flock, and bring two kids, with which, she said, she would make savoury meat, such as should resemble venison, and be agreeable to the palate of his father. Jacob made some hesitation at complying with this injunction, intimating, that if his father should discover the deception, instead of a blessing, he would pronounce on him a curse. As a farther ground of objection, he observed, that as Esau was remarkably hairy, and he naturally smooth, his father, to supply the defect of sight, might handle him, in which case a discovery must unavoidably follow. But these objections bore no weight with Rebecca, who, determined to put her design into execution, told him, whatever bad consequence ensued, she would take all upon herself: *Upon me, said she, be thy curse, my son; only obey my voice ‡.*

Jacob, being thus encouraged by his mother, threw off his diffidence, and going to the fold, brought with him, as he was directed, two fat kids. Rebecca immediately killed them, and taking the choicest parts, dressed them in such manner, by the assistance of savoury sauce, as to make the whole strongly resemble venison. Having thus prepared the food, she dressed Jacob in his brother's best attire, and covering his hands and neck with the skins of the kids, gave him the dish, ordering him immediately to take it to his father.

Jacob, agreeable to his mother's directions, went with the food to Isaac's apartment, which he had no sooner entered, than the good old man (not being able to distinguish objects from the imperfection of his sight) with surprise asked, Who he was? To which Jacob replied, *"I am Esau, thy first-born: I have punctually obeyed your command; arise, therefore, and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me."* Isaac, astonished at the haste with which his desire was executed, enquired of him how it happened that he had so quickly got the venison? To this he answered, *Because the Lord thy God brought it to me.* Being, however, still diffident as to his person, Isaac ordered him to approach near, that, by feeling him, he might be convinced whether or not he was really and verily his son Esau. Jacob accordingly went close to his aged father, who, feeling the hairy skin on his hands and neck, exclaimed, with great surprise, *"The hands are the hands of Esau, but the voice is the voice of Jacob."* He then put the question to him forcibly, saying, *Art thou my very son Esau?* To which Jacob, without the least hesitation, answered, *I am.*

The good old man, being now satisfied, arose from his couch, eat of his son's pretended venison, and drank a cup or two of wine; after which he bid him come near that he might bestow on him the promised blessing. The scent arising from Jacob's garments gave great satisfaction to Isaac. He smelt, and praised them: *The smell of my son, said he, is as the smell of a field, which the Lord hath blessed §.* He then, in a kind of extacy of pleasure, embraced and kissed his pretended first-born; and, after wishing him all

* Isaac was at this time 137 years old, so that there is no wonder he should be imperfect in his sight. It appears that he was still ignorant of Esau having sold his birth-right; for he loved him as his first-born son, and designed to bestow on him the blessing.

† Venison was the principal article of food, in these early ages, next to vegetables, and, it is very likely the aged patriarch longed for some. According to all the accounts we have of the people in the eastern countries, they had always a feast prepared before they bestowed their blessing on their first-born sons.

‡ From a circumspcct view of Rebecca's conduct throughout the whole of this affair, it appears evident that she had been made acquainted with the Divine will concerning the channel in which the grand promise was to pass. She therefore resolved to do her part towards preventing the ill effects of Isaac's partial fondness for his eldest son Esau, who had already indicated so unworthy a disposition. To this end she incites her son Jacob (as it appears) to an act of deceit, and being confident of the propriety of her conduct, absolves him from all guilt or blame. The expression, *Upon me be thy curse, my son*, is as much as to say, I will warrant thee success; I am so fully persuaded of the rectitude of the proceeding, that I fear no evil from it, but will readily bear it all if any happens. A stronger proof than this cannot be

given of Rebecca's full confidence in the propriety of her proceeding. Indeed, it does not appear that the least blame is laid upon Rebecca for her conduct: on the contrary, Isaac himself confirms the blessing which Jacob had, by her means, acquired; from whence we must necessarily conclude that she acted upon right motives, and with a full persuasion of the Divine pre-appointment and approbation. Many particular circumstances, if we were fully informed of the state of the family, might possibly be urged in her behalf; but this alone is sufficient to vindicate her from all blame. She had certainly been pre-informed that Jacob should have the pre-eminence, and, therefore, she acted religiously in preventing her husband from any endeavour to counteract the Divine will. Let it, however, be observed, that her case is so peculiar, that it cannot be drawn into example; and (detached from that important and discriminating circumstance of God's will revealed to her) her conduct would, unquestionably, be deemed blameable.

§ It is evident, from mention being here made of the smell of Jacob's garments, that the people, in the most early times, perfumed their cloaths, especially when they approached a person of superior rank; and this custom is still preserved in most parts of Asia. The comparison between the smell of the garments and that of the field is very just; for, in the eastern countries, where they have a long continuance

all heavenly and earthly blessings, || at length dismissed him.

A short time after Jacob had left his father's tent Esau entered it, and, bringing with him the venison he had been directed to prepare, invited his aged parent, in the same dutiful manner his brother had previously done, to arise, and eat of it. Isaac, surprized at this address, hastily asked, *Who art thou?* On being answered that it was his elder son Esau, he appeared, for some time, thunderstruck; but at length recovering himself, he asked, who, and where, that person was, who had been with him before, and taken away the blessing, which he neither could nor would revoke?

When the disappointed Esau heard these words from his father, he exclaimed, in the bitterness of his soul, *Bless me, even me also O my father.* Isaac then told him that his brother Jacob had, by stratagem, obtained that blessing he had designed for him; upon which Esau complained of his double perfidy, first, in artfully obtaining his birth-right, and then in robbing him of his father's benediction. He wept bitterly for some time, and then pathetically asked his father if he had not in reserve a blessing for him, repeating the importunate request, *Bless me, even me also, O my father.*

Isaac, no doubt, was greatly grieved to hear the lamentations of Esau for so great a loss; but what could he do? he had already bestowed the choicest of his blessings on Jacob, and as they were gone, he could not recall them. At length, however, in order to pacify the afflicted Esau, he told him, that his posterity should become a great people, and live by dint of the sword; and that though they might become subject to the descendants of Jacob, yet in process of time, they would shake off their yoke, and erect a dominion of their own*.

When Esau came coolly to reflect on the loss he had sustained by the artifices of his brother, he resolved, as soon as a proper opportunity should offer, to be revenged on him. The respect he had for his father laid a restraint on the execution of his design. As Isaac was far advanced in years, and exceeding infirm, Esau imagined his existence was of short duration, and therefore determined to wait till his father's death, immediately after which he resolved to put a period to the life of his brother.

Esau, having accidentally dropped some hints

of his design, they soon came to the ears of his mother, who anxious for the future welfare of her favourite Jacob, acquainted him with the horrid intentions of his brother. She told him, that the most prudent method he could take would be to absent himself till his brother's anger was, in some degree abated, and that the most proper place for him to fly to was the house of his uncle Laban in Mesopotamia: that thither he might retire for a time, and as soon as she found his brother's resentment was assuaged, she would not fail to recall him. She said the thoughts of separating gave her great affliction, though nothing in comparison with the misery she must feel, should she, in one day, be robbed of them both—of him, by the hands of his brother; and of his brother by the hand of justice.

Jacob, who ever listened to, and obeyed the counsel of his mother, was very ready to comply with her proposal; but at the same time was unwilling to depart without the consent of his father, which, in this case, he was fearful of obtaining. Rebecca soon hit upon a stratagem to remove this seeming difficulty. She immediately repaired to Isaac, to whom she complained of the great concern under which she laboured on account of Esau having taken wives from among the daughters of the Hittites. She then intimated her fears lest Jacob should follow his example; to prevent which she earnestly recommended that he might be sent to Mesopotamia, and there choose a wife from among her own kindred.

Though Isaac was unacquainted with the drift of his wife's complaint, yet, being a pious man, and knowing that the promise made to Abraham and renewed in him, was to be compleated in the issue of Jacob, he readily assented to Rebecca's proposal. Calling, therefore, his son Jacob, he first bestowed on him his blessing, and then strictly enjoined him never to marry a Canaanitish woman. To prevent so improper an alliance, he ordered him to go to his uncle Laban, in Mesopotamia, and provide himself with a wife from his family. Jacob promised to obey his father's orders, upon which the good old man, after repeating his blessing, dismissed him.

When Esau understood that his father had again blessed Jacob, and sent him into Mesopotamia to avoid marrying any of the daughters of Canaan, he began seriously to reflect on his own misconduct, and to lament having, by the indiscreet alliances he had formed, incurred the displeasure

nuance of drought, nothing can be more sweet and delightful than the scent arising from a field after a refreshing shower.

|| The prayer, which Josephus makes Isaac offer up to God on this occasion, is to the following effect: "Eternal and Supreme Being! Creator of all things! thou hast already showered down innumerable favours on my family, and promised still greater blessings in future. Ratify, O Lord, those gracious assurances, and despise not the prayers of infirm age. Protect this child from all calamities, grant him length of days, peace of mind, and as much wealth as may appear consistent with his happiness here. In fine, render him, O Lord, the dread of his enemies, and the glory of his family and friends."

* The Edomites, or Idumæans (the descendants of Esau) were, for a considerable time, much more powerful than the Israelites, who were descended from Jacob, till, in the days of David, they were entirely conquered. See 2 Sam. viii. 14. After this they were governed by deputies, or vice-

roys, appointed by the kings of Judah, and for a long time were kept in total subjection to the Jews. In the days of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, they expelled their viceroy, and set up a king of their own (see 2 Kings viii. 20.) which fulfilled the latter part of Isaac's prophecy. For some generations after this they lived independent of the Jews, and when the Babylonians invaded Judea, they not only took part with them, but greatly oppressed the inhabitants after their departure. Their animosity against the descendants of Jacob evidently appears, indeed, to have been hereditary; nor did they ever cease, for any considerable time, from broils and contentions, till, at length, they were conquered by Hircanus, and reduced to the necessity either of embracing the Jewish religion, or quitting their country. Preferring the former they were intermixed with the Jews and became one nation, so that, in the first century after the birth of Christ, the name of Idumæan was totally annihilated.

displeasure of his aged parents. To reinstate himself, therefore, if possible, in his father's esteem, he took a third wife, whose name was Mahalath, the daughter of his uncle Ishmael. This marriage certainly took place both from duty and affection; but, unfortunately for Esau, it was not attended with the wished-for consequences.

Early the next morning, after Jacob received his father's charge and blessing, he left Beersheba, and proceeded on his journey towards Haran. Determined strictly to obey his father's commands, he travelled the most private ways he could find, shunned the houses of the Canaanites, and, when night came on, took up his lodging in the open air, near a place called Luz, having only the spangled sky for his canopy, and a hard stone for his pillow. Notwithstanding the uneasiness of his situation he slept sound, during which he dreamt that he saw a ladder set upon the earth, the top of which reached to heaven, and on the rounds of it were a number of angels, some ascending, and others descending. On the summit of the ladder appeared the Almighty, who promised him all those privileges he had before done to Abraham and his father Isaac; and that wherever he went he might be assured of the divine protection. *Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land: for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of †.*

This dream made such an impression on Jacob's mind that, as soon as he awoke, he paid an awful reverence to the place, and after a short contemplation of what had passed, thus exclaimed: *this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.* Having said this, he arose, and taking the stone which had been substituted for a pillow, he set it upright, poured oil on it, and in pious commemoration of the vision, called the place *Bethel*, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *the house of God*.

Previous to his departure from this memorable spot, in order to bind himself more strongly to the service of God, he made a most solemn vow to the following effect: "That if he would protect and prosper him in his journey, provide him with common necessities in his absence, and grant him a happy return to his father's house; to him alone would he direct his religious worship; in that very place where the pillar stood on his return, would he make his devout acknowledgements, and offer unto him the tenth ‡ of whatever he should gain in the land of Mesopotamia."

After making this solemn vow, the pious traveller proceeded on his journey, and at length arrived at Haran. As he came near the town he saw some shepherds with their flocks not far from a well, which was covered with a large stone. Of these shepherds he made enquiry concerning Laban and his family, and was informed that they were all well, and that it would not be long before Rachel, his daughter, would be there with her flock. Scarce had he received this intelligence when the damsel arrived with her fleecy care, immediately on which Jacob, as a token of respect, rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered the sheep in her stead, which done he saluted her, wept for joy, and told her to whom he belonged.

Elated at this incident, Rachel, leaving Jacob at the well, immediately hastened home, and acquainted her father with what had happened. Laban was so transported at the arrival of his sister's son, that he fled, with all expedition, to the spot, and after cordially embracing him, conducted him to his house.

Jacob, after receiving some refreshment, told his uncle the occasion of his leaving home, and related the most material incidents that had happened in the course of his journey. Laban was sufficiently satisfied of the truth of his nephew's relation, and, from the singular circumstances that attended his excursion, was convinced that he was under the immediate care and protection of Divine Providence.

After being a few days with his uncle, Jacob, detesting an inactive life, applied himself to business, by assisting Laban in the care of his flocks, and such other matters as pertained to his interest. Having thus employed himself, with great diligence, for the space of a month, his uncle, one day, entered into private conversation with him, and, among other things, told him he neither expected, nor thought it reasonable that he should have his labour for nothing, and, therefore, as he intended staying with him for some time, desired him to name such wages as would satisfy him for his services.

Jacob hesitated for some time what answer to give to this request, but at length, thinking on the charms and graces of the beautiful Rachel, who had already captivated his heart, he proposed serving him seven years, on condition of having, at the expiration of that time, Rachel for his wife.

Laban readily consented to this proposal, and Jacob as readily entered on his service. The flattering

† There is something very noble and sublime in the representation of this vision. The ladder, which reached from earth to heaven, is a proper image of the providence of God, whose care extends to all things in heaven and on earth. The angels are represented ascending and descending on this mysterious ladder, because these ministering spirits are always active in the execution of the wise designs of Providence, and appointed the special guardians of the just: they ascend to receive, and descend to execute the commands of God. And, lastly, by the representation of the Divine Majesty appearing above the ladder, is meant, that though the conduct of Providence is often above the reach of human comprehension, yet the whole is directed by Infinite Wisdom and Goodness; and though in this vale of misery we can see only a few lower steps of the ladder, nearest to the earth, yet it hath a top that reacheth unto heaven: and were it possible for us to trace the chain of causes and effects to their source,

we should see them gradually ascend higher and higher, till they terminate at length in the Supreme Being, the first and proper cause of all, who presides over, and directs the complicated scheme of Providence, from the creation of the world to the consummation of all things. Certainly nothing could have been a more seasonable relief to Jacob, or filled his heart with greater joy, than the pleasing assurance, that though he was an exile from his native country, and wandering alone over the solitary wastes, yet he was still in the presence of his Maker, whose powerful arm would constantly protect him from all dangers, and under whose wings he should be absolutely safe.

‡ This is the second place in which we find mention of the *tenth*, or *tythes*, solemnly consecrated to God. Jacob promises to give them in return for his prosperous journey, as his grandfather Abraham had given them in return for his victory over the confederate princes.

flattering prospect of possessing so aimable a partner, after the seven years, and the endearments of her pleasing company during the time, rendered that interval of waiting apparently short and light.

When the time of Jacob's servitude was expired, he required Laban to fulfil his contract by giving him his daughter Rachel in marriage. Laban seemingly assented, and, on the occasion, invited all his friends and neighbours to the solemnization of the nuptials. But Laban, desirous of retaining Jacob longer in his service, had projected a scheme for that purpose, the execution of which gave great uneasiness to his nephew. After the entertainment was over, and the company retired, Laban caused Leah, his eldest daughter, to be conducted to Jacob's bed, instead of the beautiful Rachel, to whom he was contracted. When day-light appeared in the morning, and Jacob discovered the deception §, he immediately arose, and going to Laban, expostulated with him on the impropriety of his conduct. Laban, who had prepared an answer for the occasion, told him, in a magisterial tone, "That it was an unprecedented thing in that country (and would have been deemed an injury to her sister) to marry the younger before the elder; but (continued he in a milder tone) if you will fulfil the nuptial week with your wife, and consent to serve another seven years for her sister, I am content to take your word for it, and to give Rachel to you as soon as the seven days (or nuptial week for Leah) are expired.

This unfair treatment greatly perplexed Jacob, but his distinguished affection for Rachel made him resolved to obtain her, however dear the purchase. He therefore readily consented to his uncle's secondary terms, and when the nuptial ceremonies for Leah were over, he likewise took Rachel in marriage.

The distinguished charms of Rachel, in preference to those of Leah, made Jacob pay the greatest respect to the former; but his happiness was greatly curtailed by Leah's having four sons || even before Rachel had conceived. This circumstance particularly affected Rachel, who in a fit of melancholy, one day told her husband, that unless *he gave her children*, she should certainly

die with grief. *Give me*, said she, *children, or else I die* *.

Jacob was greatly vexed at this speech of his beloved wife, who seemed to lay the whole fault of her sterility to him. He therefore sharply rebuked her in words to the following effect: "That it was not in his power to work miracles; that the want of children was agreeable to the divine will; and that such uneasy and discontented behaviour was the way to prevent, rather than obtain, such a favour †."

This answer greatly mortifying Rachel, she resolved to supply the defect of herself by the same means that had been practised by her grandmother Sarah. She accordingly made a proposition to Jacob that he should take her handmaid Bilhah as a concubinary wife, and that if she should bare children they should be accounted hers. Jacob assented to this proposal, and, in the proper course of time, Bilhah was delivered of a son, whom Rachel named *Dan*, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *judging*. Within a twelvemonth after this Bilhah bore another son, whom Rachel called *Naphtali*.

By this time Leah imagined she had done bearing children, and, therefore, to imitate her sister's policy, she gave her maid (named Zilpah) to Jacob, by whom she had likewise two sons, the one named Gad, and the other Ashur.

Reuben, the eldest son of Jacob, was now arrived at years sufficient to be trusted by himself, and wandering one day in the fields, about the time of wheat harvest, he happened to meet with some mandrakes ‡, which he brought home and presented to his mother Leah. Pleased with the sight of what the boy had brought, Rachel desired Leah to give her a part; but instead of complying with her request, she gave her this forbidding answer: "That having robbed her of her husband's affections, she could not expect to have any part of her son's present." Notwithstanding this contemptuous answer, Rachel was determined, if possible, to obtain some of the mandrakes, to do which she thought of inducing Leah to comply with her request by a method, which above all others, was most likely to prove effectual. It happened to be her turn that night to enjoy the company of her husband; and,

§ As all marriages in the east were solemnized in the evening, or rather at midnight, and as the bride was veil'd, so it was no difficult matter to impose on Jacob, who did not expect any such deceit. Dr. Shaw tells us, that in the Levant the bride is brought home in the dark to her husband, and being introduced to the haram, or apartment for the women, her mother goes and conducts the bridegroom to her; but he does not see her till the next morning.

|| The names of these sons were, Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah.—*Reuben* signifies *a son given by Divine regard*; *Simeon* implies *God hath heard or considered me*; *Levi* signifies *joined*; and *Judah*, *praise or thanksgiving*.

* This expression furnishes us with a lively picture of human folly in general. If children are to parents like a flow'ry chaplet, whose beauties blossom with ornament, and whose odours breathe delight, death, or some unforeseen misfortune, may find means to entwine themselves with the lovely wreath. Whenever our souls eagerly long after some inferior acquisition, it may be truly said, in the words of our Divine Master, *Ye know not what ye ask*. Does Providence withhold the thing we long for? It denies in mercy, and only withholds the occasion of our misery, if not the instrument of our ruin. With a sickly appetite we often loath what is wholesome, and linger after our bane. Where the imagina-

tion dreams of unmingled sweets, there experience frequently finds the bitterness of woe.

† It is not to be wondered at that such a man as Jacob should be offended at an expression made use of by his beloved wife, which, in its own nature, was little better than blasphemy. To say, *Give me children* was certainly an high indignity offered to the majesty of heaven, as none but God can give being to any creature whatever.

‡ It is the general opinion of the learned that our translation is wrong, in rendering the Hebrew word *Dodaim*, Mandrakes. The mention of Mandrakes occurs but once more in holy writ, which is in Solomon's song, where they are celebrated for their fragrant scent, and ranked with other pleasant fruits. What we call the Mandrake-apple has a strong nauseous scent, and no ways inviting, either in taste or colour, to a child, as Reuben then was; so that it was most probably some other kind of fruit or flower which had something attractive, both in taste and smell, that the mandrake had not. As the word here used may be rendered *disfrable flowers*, some have thought them to have been either lilies, violets, jessamines, citrons, roses, or the like; and others have supposed it a fruit, which the Syrians call *maur*, resembling the banana, or Indian fig.

and, therefore, in order to obtain her ends, she told Leah, if she would oblige her with some of her son's mandrakes, she would wave her pretensions for that night, and resign the right of her husband's bed to her. This proposition being approved of by Leah, the agreement was accordingly made; and as soon as Jacob came home she related what had passed, and asked him to confirm the bargain. Jacob readily assented, and Leah enjoyed his company that night, the consequence of which was that she conceived again, and had a fifth son, whom she called Issachar, which signifies *hire* or *reward*. After this she had another son, whom she named Zebulun; and last of all, a daughter, called Dinah.

Rachel had long lamented not having issue of her own body; but at length it pleased God to remove her troubles on that head by giving her a son. As soon as she found she had conceived, she exclaimed, with the most expressive joy, *God hath taken away my reproach* §; and when the child was born she called his name Joseph, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *increase*.

Soon after the birth of Joseph the appointed time of Jacob's last servitude being expired, he began to entertain thoughts of returning to his own country, and accordingly begged his uncle to dismiss him and his family. But Laban, who had found, by experience, no small advantage from his services, intreated him to stay a little longer, promising, at the same time, that if he would comply with his request, he would give him whatever wages he should think proper to ask. In answer to this, Jacob reminded him of the great increase of his substance since it had been under his care, and that he now thought it high time to make some provision for himself and family; so that therefore he was resolved to return to Canaan, unless he could point out to him some method whereby he might improve his fortune, and not longer waste his time in humble servitude.

Laban could not bear the thoughts of parting with Jacob, and therefore again pressed him hard to stay, at the same time offering him his own terms. After some farther controversy, Jacob at length consented to stay with his uncle on the following conditions: That they should pass through the whole flock both of sheep and goats, and having separated all the speckled cattle from the white, the former should be committed to the care of Laban's sons, and the latter to the care of Jacob; and that whatsoever spotted or brown sheep or goats should, from that time forward, be produced out of the white flock (which he was to keep) should be accounted his hire.

Laban readily consenting to this proposal, the flocks were accordingly separated. The spotted cattle were delivered into the custody of Laban, while the rest were committed to the care of Jacob; and to prevent any intercourse between

them, they were placed three days journey apart.

Whether it was from his own observation on the power of fancy in the time of conception, or (what seems much more likely) from the interposition of Divine wisdom in furnishing him with the idea; but so it was that he pursued a very extraordinary method to improve his own stock, and at the same time lessen that of Laban. He took rods or twigs of the green poplar, hazel and chesnut-trees, and stripping off part of the rinds in streaks, cause some of the white to appear on the twigs. These twigs he placed in the watering troughs when the cattle came to drink, at the time in which they usually engender; so that by seeing the speckled twigs they might conceive and bring forth speckled cattle. He also took particular care to place the twigs before the fattest and most healthy, and to avoid putting any before those that were weak and sickly; by which means he might not only obtain for himself the greater number, but also the choicest and most valuable.

This scheme succeeded to his utmost wishes, and in a short time he became exceeding rich and powerful. But the extraordinary increase of his property exposed him to the envy not only of Laban, but also his sons, the former of whom treated him with great coolness, and the latter frequently accused him of having procured to himself a good estate out of their fortunes.

Jacob, finding himself envied by his uncle and kinsmen, had some thoughts of leaving them, and retiring, with his family and effects, into his own country. This design was, in a short time, ultimately resolved on, in consequence of the Almighty appearing to him in a vision, and ordering him to return to the land of Canaan.

Though Jacob was fully resolved to obey the Divine command, yet he thought it most prudent, previous to his departure, to hold a consultation with his two principal wives, namely, Leah and Rachel, in order to obtain their consent. Accordingly, sending for them into the field (which, from its privacy he thought the most proper place for the business) he told them, that for some time past he had observed their father had treated him with great coolness and indifference, and even sometimes with marks of displeasure, though he was not sensible of any just cause for such behaviour. He appealed to them concerning his industry and fidelity, and the injustice of their father towards him, first, in having deceived him, and afterwards in having so often changed his wages ||. He observed, that God had turned all their father's devices to his advantage, had taken away his cattle, and giving them to him. He then told them, that the Lord appeared to him in a dream, reminding him of the solemn vow he had made at Bethel, in his journey to Mesopotamia, and that he had commanded him to return to the Land of Canaan.

Leah

§ The reason why the women of Abraham's family considered barrenness as a *reproach* was, because they were exempted from the promises of God made to that patriarch concerning the vast multiplication of his seed, and because the Messiah could not proceed from them. As the Divine Redeemer was to descend from some one of Abraham's fa-

mily, so every woman belonging to it had an equal right to expect being so honoured.

|| It is to be observed that when Laban found Jacob so successful in the produce of his flocks, he repented of his bargain, and several times altered the agreement, which God, as many times, turned to Jacob's advantage.

Leah and Rachel, having listened with great attention to what Jacob had said, readily agreed to go with him; and by all means recommended his paying a strict obedience to the Divine command.

In consequence of this Jacob, having made the necessary preparations for his departure, set his wives and children upon camels, taking the advantage of his father-in-law's absence (who was gone to shear his sheep, and which likewise gave Rachel the opportunity of stealing away his images *) he set out upon his journey, taking with him all his cattle, and other property, he had acquired during his stay at Haran.

Jacob had proceeded on his journey three days before Laban received intelligence of his flight, in which time he passed the Euphrates, and having gained the mountains of Gilead, he there stopped, in order to refresh himself and attendants, who by this time were become greatly fatigued with travelling.

Laban no sooner heard that his nephew had absconded, than he immediately pursued him with a mind fully bent on revenge. But in this he was checked by the interposition of the Almighty, who, appearing to him the same night in a vision, threatened him severely if he committed any hostility or violence against his servant Jacob.

In consequence of this when Laban came up with his nephew at Mount Gilead, he only expostulated with him on his want of respect in stealing away his daughters, and thereby preventing them from taking their leave as became his children, or departing in a manner consistent with their rank and dignity. He added that such conduct might have exposed him to his most severe resentment, and that he might have sustained such injury from him who was by far the most powerful. That, indeed, he would have pursued measures of revenge, had he not been diverted therefrom by the immediate prohibition of God himself.

In answer to this Jacob reminded his uncle of the cheat he had put upon him, in making him serve so long for a woman he did not love; the altering of the agreement so many times made between them relative to the sheep; and, lastly, his late strange behaviour to him and his family. All these, and many more, he said, were but ill requitals for his care and diligence, as well as the blessings which God had heaped on him for his sake.

Laban had still another thing to lay to Jacob's charge, namely, the stealing of his gods. Fired with resentment at this accusation, Jacob (who knew nothing of Rachel's having taken them) desired him to make the most diligent search for

them throughout his family, assuring him, at the same time, that on whomsoever they should be found, that person should immediately be put to death.

In consequence of this Laban proceeded to search the different tents, and having examined those of Jacob, Leah, and her handmaids, without effect, he went to the tent of Rachel, who, conscious of her crime, and fearful of the consequences should she be detected, had just concealed the images in the camel's furniture, on which she sat herself down to rest.

Having taken this precaution, she pleaded as an excuse for not rising to salute him, that she was exceeding ill, and that to move then might greatly increase her complaint. This excuse was readily admitted by her father, who, after searching every other part of the tent without effect, departed.

When Laban acquainted Jacob with his bad success, the latter upbraided him, in very severe terms, for his unjust suspicions. He then recounted the great services he had done him during a number of years, and concluded with these words, *Except the God of my Father had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away empty.*

Laban, conscious that Jacob's charge was most justly founded, made not the least attempt to vindicate his conduct; but, waving the argument, assumed an air of respect for Jacob, and a fondness for his wives and children; and, in order to remove all further animosity, proposed a treaty of alliance between them, and to erect a monument which should be a standing witness of the same to future ages.

This proposition being agreed to, and the covenant signed, they accordingly raised a pillar or heap of stones †, as a memento of the circumstance; and then took mutual oaths that neither should invade the property of the other. A particular injunction was likewise laid on Jacob, that he should use his wives and children with all becoming tenderness and affection.

The covenant being thus ratified, and sacrifices offered up on the occasion, Jacob entertained his brethren that night in as magnificent a manner as the nature of his situation would admit. The next morning Laban took leave of Jacob and his family, and each departed for their respective habitations.

Jacob had been favoured with a heavenly vision, in his way from Canaan to Mesopotamia; and the Almighty was pleased to favour him again with the like token of his protection on his return. As he was proceeding on his journey, there appeared before him a body of heavenly messengers, which he no sooner saw than he broke out into the following exclamation,

This

* The Hebrew word which we render *images* is *teraphim*, a kind of penates, or household-gods which they worshipped as *symbols* of the Deity, and consulted as oracles—hence Laban calls them his *gods*. These *teraphim* were afterwards known by the name of *talimén*, as they are to this day in most parts of India. Some think those of Laban's represented angels, who were supposed to declare the mind of God. Rachel might steal them either for their curiosity or worth; but it is most probable she still retained a tincture of her father's superstition, and designed to make them the objects of her worship in Canaan; for it appears (Gen. xxv. 4.) that Jacob, when he made a thorough reformation in his

house, caused them to be taken from her, and buried them under the oak which was by Shechem.

† The heap of stones raised by Laban and Jacob in memory of this covenant was called *Gilead*, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies, *an heap of witnesses*. This circumstance in after-ages, gave name to the whole country thereabout, which lies on the east of the Sea of Galilee, being part of that ridge of mountains which ran from Mount Lebanon southward on the east of the Holy Land, and included the mountainous region, called, in the New Testament, *Trachonitis*.

This is God's host; from which additional mark of Divine protection he called the place Mahanaim †.

Though Jacob had the greatest reason to rely on the protection of the Almighty, yet, as he drew near the confines of Edom, and within the reach of his incensed brother Esau (whom he had highly provoked, and concerning the abatement of whose resentment he had received no account from his mother though so long absent) he thought it most prudent to send a message to him, in order to allay his anger, and, if possible, regain his fraternal affection.

He accordingly sent messengers to Esau, whose residence was at Mount Seir §, otherwise called the country of Edom, whither he had settled himself soon after his marriage with the daughter of Ishmael.

The message Jacob sent to his brother was to the following effect: that during his residence in Mesopotamia he had acquired prodigious wealth, and that as he was now on his return to his native country, he thought proper to notify his arrival to him, and at the same time to implore his favour and friendship.

The messengers having discharged their embassy, returned, and gave Jacob such an account as greatly alarmed him. They brought no direct answer from Esau, and only told their master that his brother was coming to meet him at the head of four hundred men.

Jacob, concluding that the design of this mighty retinue was to act against him in an hostile manner, was greatly perplexed, and at a loss in what manner to proceed. He knew, on the one hand, that the number of his people was too small to engage with that of his brother; and, on the other hand, that his baggage was too heavy for flight. At length he came to to this conclusion, to divide his company into two bands, so that, if Esau should fall upon one, he might have the chance of escaping with the other.

Such was the plan laid down by Jacob; but as he well knew from former experience, that his safety depended upon the Divine protection, independent of all human creatures, he, in this critical juncture, addressed himself to God in a very humble and submissive prayer, the substance of which was to the following effect: "O thou eternal majesty of heaven, whom my father worshipped, and who alone is the object of my prayer, permit an unworthy creature to repeat thy own promise to thee. When my family began to increase, thou wast graciously pleased to order me to return to my native country; and to encourage me, thou promised that thou wouldest protect me. What an in-

finite condescension, O my God, to a poor unworthy creature! The least of all thy mercies is too good for me; and yet thou hast been pleased to shew me the greatest. When I crossed Jordan, I had nothing besides my staff; but in thy goodness thou hast caused my family and substance to increase so fast, that I am now possessed of great riches. O God, thou promised to make my seed a great nation; and although I know thou couldst suffer them to be killed, and raise them up from the dead, yet, O most merciful father, be pleased still to preserve them, and suffer not my enraged brother to destroy them; I know that thy promise is truth itself, and I will cheerfully trust in thee."

After having thus humbly and earnestly implored the guidance and protection of the Almighty, Jacob determined to pursue another measure, in order to appease the anger of his brother, which he imagined to be no less severe than when he left Canaan. Imagining that Esau might consider his first message as an empty piece of formality, he resolved, as he had already informed him of the great wealth of which he was possessed, to send him a very liberal present. He accordingly selected from his stock the following articles, viz. two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats; two hundred ewes and twenty rams; thirty milch camels with their colts; forty swine, and ten bulls; twenty she-asses and ten foals. These being divided into separate droves, he ordered the servants to keep a proper space between each, and strictly charged them that whenever they should meet his brother, to present each to him separately, and to tell him that they were presents sent by Jacob to his lord Esau.

Jacob, having dismissed his servants with this present to his brother, arose early next morning, and, before day-light, sent his wives and children, together with all his substance, forward on their journey, staying himself for some time, behind. A short time after the departure of his family and children, being alone, he was accosted by an angel, who, appearing in the shape of a man, began to wrestle with him, which exercise they continued till break of day. The contest was certainly unequal, notwithstanding which, the angel permitted Jacob to prevail; but to convince him that he did not obtain the victory by means of his own strength, and how easily himself could have made a conquest, he touched the sinews ||, or hollow of his thigh, which was immediately put out of joint.

The angel then asked Jacob his name, and on being answered, he told him he should hereafter be called *Israel**, which signifies a man that has prevailed

† The Hebrew word Mahanaim signifies two hosts, or camps, because the angels appeared like two armies drawn up on either side for his protection, according to that beautiful expression of the Psalmist, *The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.* Psal. xxxiv. 7.

§ The place called Mahanaim was situated between Mount Gilead and the brook Jabbok. It was afterwards one of the residences of the Levites, and one of the strong places belonging to David.

§ The Land of Seir (from which the mount took its name) was situated on the south of the Dead Sea, from whence it extended to the Arabian Gulf. It was called Seir from a considerable person of that name among the Horites,

who originally possessed it. During Jacob's absence Esau made a conquest of it, and thereby verified part of his father's prediction, *by thy sword shalt thou live,* (see Gen. xxvii. 40) and from him it was called *the country of Edom.*

|| This was the sinew or tendon that keeps the thigh bone in the socket, not only in the human species, but also in the brute creation; and from this circumstance, even to the present time, the Jews will not eat that part. In the *Mishnah*, one of their books of directions concerning religious ceremonies, they have a whole chapter prescribing the manner in which it is to be cut out of the beast when killed; and it is further enjoined that they shall not eat the sinews of the hips of any animal whatever.

* The words in the text are, *Thy name shall be called no*

prevailed with God. After saying this the angel blessed Jacob, and then departed. In consequence of so singular a circumstance, Jacob called the place where it happened *Peniel*, which signifies the *Face of God*, being confident that it must have been a Divine agent with whom he had been contending.

Soon after the angel disappeared, Jacob, though lame, made what haste he could to join his company. Having come up with them they proceeded, with great expedition on their journey; but they had not travelled far before Jacob discovered his brother Esau, attended by a considerable body of men, coming towards him. Alarmed at the sight of so powerful a retinue, Jacob immediately divided his family into three companies, placing them at equal distances from each other. The two maid servants and their sons went first; Leah and her children next; and Rachael and Joseph (the latter of whom was now about six years old) in the rear, whilst himself lead the van.

As soon as Jacob approached his brother, he shewed his respect to him by bowing seven times to the ground. Esau, filled with the tenderest sense of fraternal affection, at once removed his brother's fears and compliments, by running to him with eager joy, falling on his neck, and most cordially embracing him. He wept over him for some time; after which, seeing his wives and children prostrate themselves before him in the order Jacob had placed them, he returned their civilities with the like tenderness he had done his brother's. Thus was revenge turned into love and pity; and Esau, who once thirsted for his brother's blood, dissolves into tears of joy, and melts with the softest endearments of love and friendship.

Thus transported with this happy interview, Esau surveyed his brother's possessions with pleasure, and expressed his satisfaction at the great success he had met with during his residence in Mesopotamia. He kindly acknowledged the presents Jacob had sent him, but begged he would excuse his accepting them, because they would be superfluous to him who had already great abundance. Jacob, however, pressed him so earnestly, that he at length agreed to accept them; to make some recompence for which, Esau invited him to Seir, and offered to accompany him the remaining part of the journey. Though Jacob had no design of accepting this offer, yet he did not chuse to make a direct refusal. He therefore represented to Esau the tenderness of his children and flocks, and that they could not travel with such expedition as would be agreeable to him. He begged they might not confine him to their slow movements, but that he would return home his own pace, and he would follow with as much expedition as possible. Esau then offered to leave him a number of men to guard and conduct him into his terri-

tories; but this compliment Jacob likewise thought proper to decline, upon which, after saluting each other, they parted.

Esau returned immediately to Seir, and expected that his brother would follow him; but Jacob turned another way, and coming to a spot which struck his fancy, he resolved, (at least for a time) to settle in it; in consequence of which he built a house for his family, as also proper conveniences for the reception of his cattle †.

After staying here some time, Jacob removed to Shechem, and having purchased a piece of ground of Hamor, the prince of the country, he there pitched his tents, intending to make it his fixed place of residence. He also erected an altar, and called it El-alohé-Israel, which signifies *the Great or Mighty God of Israel*.

Jacob might probably have lived at this place a considerable time, had it not been for an occurrence of a very singular nature. His daughter Dinah, who was at this time about sixteen years of age, and very beautiful in person, being desirous of seeing the dresses and ornaments of the women of that country, rambled abroad from her mother's tent, in order to gratify her curiosity. Young Shechem, the son of Hamor, (the king of the country) happening to see her, was so captivated with her charms, that, unable to restrain the force of his passion, he determined, if possible, to possess her. He diligently watched her for some time, till at length taking the opportunity of her being alone, he suddenly seized on her, and, by mere dint of violence, obtained his wishes.

But notwithstanding this dishonourable act Shechem was still so enamoured with Dinah's charms, that he most earnestly wished to marry her; and strongly solicited his father to intercede with her friends in his behalf, and to form a treaty with them for that purpose.

Jacob was soon informed of the depredation made on his daughter's chastity, and though greatly incensed at so unjustifiable a proceeding, he resolved not to take any notice of it till his sons (who were then abroad) came home. Accordingly, on their arrival, he told them the injury their sister had sustained, and by whom; upon which their resentment was raised to the greatest height, and they vowed severely to revenge the dishonour thus thrown upon their family.

In the mean time, Shechem having prevailed with his father to use his interest in obtaining for him the beautiful Dinah, they both went together to make the proposal to Jacob, whose sons were with him at the time of their arrival. After the first salutations were over, Hamor, addressing himself to Jacob, told him the great affection his son had for his daughter Dinah, and earnestly intreated him that he would give her to him in marriage. He at the same time proposed that Jacob's family should intermarry with his people, and offered them the privilege of settling and trading

more Jacob, but Israel. This expression clearly evinces the mis-translation of some passages in the scriptures, it being certain that the patriarch was frequently after called Jacob. But this seeming contradiction will be easily adjusted, by substituting the words, *not only for no more*; in which case the sense will read thus, Thou shalt *not only* be called Jacob, but *also* Israel, the latter of which names was at

length established in Jacob's descendants.

† From the buildings Jacob erected here for the use of his cattle, the place was called *Succoth*, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *booths* or *tents*. It lay on the east side of the Jordan, and at a small distance from the bank of the river.

trading in any part of his dominions they thought proper. To strengthen this proposal, young Shechem promised to give Dinah as large a dowry, and her relations as costly presents, as they should desire. In short, he offered them whatever advantages they should please to nominate, bidding them only name their terms, and they should be granted to the uttermost, provided they would but give him Dinah in marriage.

These were certainly very fair offers, and such as evinced that Shechem was desirous of making some recompence for the injury he had done his beloved Dinah. But, instead of accepting these proposals; the treacherous sons of Jacob, who only meditated the most bloody revenge, made the following reply: "That it was not lawful for them to contract an affinity with any uncircumcised nation, but that, if they and their people would consent to be circumcised, (as they were) they would then agree to the terms proposed."

Shechem was so enamoured with Dinah, and Hamor so fond of his son, that, notwithstanding the singularity of this proposal, they readily agreed to it. Accordingly, leaving Jacob and his son, they immediately repaired to the city, and having convened a general assembly of the inhabitants, they told them, "that the Israelites were a wealthy, peaceable, and good-natured people; that they might reap many great advantages from them, and, in process of time, by intermarrying with them, might make all their substance (which was very considerable) their own; but that this could not be done without a general consent to be circumcised."

Captivated with the prospect of great wealth, and influenced by the powerful interest both Hamor and his son had among them, they unanimously assented to the proposal; and on that very day every male of them was circumcised.

This circumstance furnished Simeon and Levi (the sons of Jacob and brother to Dinah, by the same mother) with an opportunity of wreaking that revenge on the Schechemites which they had privately resolved on for the violation of their sister's chastity. Sensible of the great pain the Schechemites felt in consequence of circumcision, they determined to take advantage of it, by attacking them at a time when they knew they must be totally incapable of making the least resistance. Accordingly, on the third day † after the operation (having properly armed themselves for the purpose) they went (unknown

to their father) into the city, and suddenly falling on the inhabitants put every male to the sword, Hamor and his son not excepted. They then searched the king's palace, where, finding their sister Dinah, they immediately brought her away; after which they plundered the houses of the city, took both women and children captive, and possessed themselves of what property they could, as well in cattle as in other articles; and such things as they could not take with them, they totally destroyed. §

When Jacob (who was totally unacquainted with these unjustifiable proceedings till after they had taken place) first heard of them, he was greatly incensed against his sons, and very severely reprimanded them for committing so treacherous and barbarous an action. But Simeon and Levi paid little attention to their father's rebuke; on the contrary, such were their ideas of the crime committed in the violation of their sister's chastity, that they intimated to him the resentment they had shewn was but just for so base an injury.

It is not to be wondered at that this violent outrage committed in the capital of the Shechemites, should exasperate the whole people of the country against the Israelites. This seems to have been the reason why the Almighty, soon after the transaction happened, commanded the patriarch to remove to Bethel, the place which he had dedicated to his immediate service. Though the sons of Jacob had wholly destroyed one colony of the Canaanites, yet there were great numbers bordering on the spot, who, either in their own defence, or in revenge for the cruel and unjust treatment of their countrymen, might give the good patriarch much disquiet, if not totally destroy him and his family. His Omnipotent Creator, therefore, in order to secure him from danger, ordered him to go to Bethel, there to fix his residence, and erect an altar to the same God who appeared to him when he fled from the presence of his brother Esau.

The obedient and pious Jacob hesitated not to comply with the divine command; but previous to his setting about the business, he thought it necessary to make a reformation in his family, and cleanse it from the pollutions that might be offensive in so sacred a place. To effect this he strictly charged not only his own family, but all that belonged to him, to bring out their idols, or strange gods, then clean themselves ||, and change their garments, telling them they must go,

† This was the time, according to most physicians, when fevers generally attended circumcision, occasioned by the violent inflammation of the wound. The Jews themselves observe, that the pain was much more severe on the third day than at any other time after the operation.

§ Though the sacred historian only mentions Simeon and Levi to have been the perpetrators of this horrid act of cruelty, yet there is not the least doubt but they had considerable assistance. They, indeed, are only mentioned because, being own brothers to Dinah both by father and mother, and consequently more concerned to resent the injury done to her honour, they are made the chief contrivers and conductors of it. It is, however, reasonable to imagine, that the rest of Jacob's sons, who were old enough to bear arms, as well as the greatest part of his domestics, were engaged in the execution of this wicked exploit; because it is scarcely conceivable how two men alone should be able to master a whole city, to slay all the men in it, and take all the women cap-

tives, who, on this occasion, may be supposed more than sufficient to have overpowered them.

|| The Hebrew word, which we translate *clean*, properly signifies, *the washing of the body with water*. As there is some analogy between external cleanliness and purity of mind, it may denote the cleansing of the soul by repentance from all those impurities whereby a man becomes morally polluted in the sight of God. In which view, this rite of washing the body with water was used as a sign of inward purification, not only among the idolatrous heathens, but also by the worshippers of the true God, both before and under the law. *Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes*, Isaiah i. 16. And as men should at all times have their souls adorned with this inward purity, so especially when they approach their Maker in the duties of his immediate worship. It was therefore highly commendable in Jacob, on this solemn occasion, to enjoin all under his care to cleanse and purify themselves particularly from

go, with all expedition, to Bethel, the House of their God.

They readily obeyed the patriarch's orders, and delivered up to him not only their idols*, but also their ear-rings†; all of which Jacob buried in a deep hole under an oak‡ near Shechem.

Jacob, having thus cleansed his family from impurities, set out with them on his journey to Bethel. In order to ensure their safety, the Almighty, ever mindful of his promise to his chosen people, struck such a terror into the people belonging to the country through which they passed, that, notwithstanding the provocation given by the massacre at Shechem, not a single person presumed to interrupt them, and they travelled to their destined place without the least molestation.

No sooner did Jacob arrive at Bethel§, than, agreeable to the Divine command, he erected an altar, which he called El-beth-el; and on which he performed the very vow he had before made when on his journey from Canaan to Mesopotamia.

A short time after Jacob had performed this act of worship, the Almighty was pleased to appear to him again, and to give him fresh assurances of his design to multiply his posterity, and to bestow on him the inheritance of the land of Canaan. As a lasting monument of this additional mark of the Divine favour, Jacob erected a pillar of stone, which he consecrated with the usual form, by pouring on it wine and oil.

After being some time at Bethel, Jacob, urged by filial affection, resolved to leave it, in order to pay a visit to his ancient father at Mamre. Accordingly, taking with him his family, they set out on their journey, intending to stop that night at Ephrath (afterwards called Bethlehem) a small place not far distant from Bethel. But before they could reach the in-

tended spot Rachael fell suddenly in labour, and having very severe pangs, the midwife, in order to encourage her, bid her not fear, for she would have another son. She was, indeed, delivered of a boy, but expired immediately after, having but just a moment's space of time to give him the name of *Benoni*, which signifies *the son of my sorrow*. But Jacob, unwilling to increase the remembrance of so melancholy a circumstance, called him *Benjamin*, that is, *the son of my right hand*, or *my strength*; intimating thereby his peculiar affection for this last pledge of his beloved wife.

The remains of Rachel were deposited at the place where she died, and in order to perpetuate her memory, Jacob erected a monument of stone|| over her grave, which the sacred historian tells us was extant in his days.

But this was not the only misfortune that attended Jacob on his journey to Mamre. After travelling some way farther in order to refresh himself and family, he stopped and pitched his tents on a pleasant spot, at some distance from the Tower of Edar*. During his stay here his eldest son Reuben, having taken a liking to Bilhah (the concubinary wife which Rachel had given to Jacob) made no scruple of defiling her. Though Jacob took no notice of this disagreeable circumstance at the time it occurred, yet he was greatly afflicted in his mind, and retained a painful sense of it even to his dying day, as is evident from a reproachful hint he gave him a short time before his death†.

Though these aggravated griefs sat heavy on Jacob's mind, yet he continued his resolution of visiting his aged parent. He accordingly pursued his journey, and at length came to Mamre the place of his father's abode. It is not to be doubted but, at their first meeting, a reciprocal affection displayed itself, as each must be happy in the sight of the other after so long an absence.

With this circumstance the sacred historian concludes

from idolatry, and from those guilty stains lately contracted by shedding innocent blood, as they would otherwise be unfit to hold an intercourse with their God; as if he had said, Put off your sordid apparel, especially those garments in which you were so lately defiled with blood, and put on your cleanest raiment, as an emblem of your being divested of all impure affections, and clothed with those internal graces and pious dispositions, which are the ornament of the soul, and render it comely in the sight of God.

* The greater part of these idols belonged to the Shechemites; but among them were those which Rachel had stole from her father Laban, and which she had probably worshipped (unknown to her father) during her stay at Shechem.

† The ear-rings and other jewels worn by these people were consecrated to the honour of that idol whom they worshipped; and on them were engraven some figures. The reason of their wearing them was, to preserve them (as they thought) from any danger or misfortune; and from this act of idolatry we may suppose arose the custom among the papists of wearing the relics and images of their saints.

‡ The oak here mentioned seems to have been the place where these servants of Jacob, who had strange gods, used to meet; and certainly no place could be more proper for burying their idols than the spot on which they had worshipped them.

§ According to the sacred historian (though he does not mention any time) it appears that soon after Jacob's arrival at Bethel, Deborah (Rebecca's nurse) died there. What age she was we are not informed; but it is certain she must have been very old, as she came with Rebecca from Mesopotamia, when she was married to Isaac. Her remains were deposited beneath an oak (as was the custom in those days)

called Allon-bachuth, from which the Jews have a tradition that Rebecca died on the same day with her nurse; that word, in the Hebrew language, signifying *mourning*.

|| It is the opinion of the learned Bochart, that this monument of Rachel's (which is the first we read of in scripture) was a *pyramid*, curiously wrought, and raised upon a basis of twelve large stones, whereby Jacob intended to intimate the number of his sons. It was certainly standing in the time when Moses wrote, and, just before Saul was anointed king, there is some mention made of it, 1 Sam. x. 2. But that the present monument cannot be the same which Jacob erected is very manifest, from its being a modern and Turkish structure. Mr. Le Brun, who was at the place, and took a draught of it, says, that the tomb is cut into the cavity of a rock, and covered with a dome, supported by four pillars, on fragments of a wall, which open to the sepulchre. The work is rude enough, and without any ornament; but the whole is as entire as if it had been but just made; which makes it hard to imagine that it has subsisted ever since Jacob's time. Maundrell's Travels, and Calmet's Dictionary.

* Some commentators are of opinion that by the Tower of Edar, is meant, the field near Bethlehem, where those shepherds were keeping their flock to whom the angels appeared, and gave information of the birth of Our Saviour. Among others, one reason which induces them to think so is, because the word Edar, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies a *flock*; so that what is here called the *tower of Edar* should be rendered *the tower of the flocks*. Others are of opinion, that by the *tower of Edar* is to be understood some place near Jerusalem; it being spoken of by the prophet Micah as the place or strong hold of the daughters of Sion. See Micah iv. 8.

† See Genesis xlix. 4.

concludes the life of Isaac, who, as he informs us, paid the debt of nature in the 180th year of his age, being five years older than his father Abraham. He had been very infirm, and almost blind, for a considerable time; but was always respectable for his piety, tranquillity and submission to the will of heaven. He was buried by

his two sons, Esau and Jacob, in the cave of Machpelah, which Abraham purchased of Ephron as a burying-place for his family. It is to be observed, that the death of Isaac is here mentioned by way of anticipation; it being certain that he lived some years after Jacob's return from Mesopotamia.

C H A P. VII.

Joseph is hated by his brethren, who conspire against his life. He is sold to Potiphar an officer belonging to the King of Egypt. Tamar's stratagem against her father-in-law. Joseph is advanced in Potiphar's house. Resists the temptation of his mistress. Is falsely accused and imprisoned. Gains the favour of the keeper, who commits to his charge two of Pharaoh's principal officers. He interprets their dreams, as also those of the king himself, for the latter of which he is highly promoted. Marries in a very noble family. His prudent management in public affairs. His brethren arrive in Egypt, and are imprisoned by him, but sent back on leaving a pledge, and promising to bring to him their youngest brother Benjamin. They fulfil their engagement, return to Egypt, and are kindly entertained by Joseph. He at length makes himself known to them, and sends for his aged father, who (supposing him to be dead) is greatly rejoiced at the news of so unexpected an event. Joseph introduces his father and brethren to the king, who receives them kindly, and makes ample provision for their future welfare. Death and burial of Jacob. Joseph forgives his brethren the injuries done to him; in the former part of their lives. Death and character of Joseph.

THE pious Jacob had not long enjoyed the company of his aged father, after his return from Mesopotamia, before a circumstance occurred which gave him great unhappiness. Joseph was his beloved child, as being the son of his dear-departed Rachel, besides which he particularly attracted the attention of his father from his very extraordinary genius. In consequence of these circumstances Jacob, as a token of his peculiar love to his favourite Joseph, gave him clothes much richer than he did the rest; and, among others, one coat, which was made of a changeable, or party-coloured stuff†. This naturally raised the envy of his brothers; besides which they had for some time considered him as a spy, because he had told his father of some indiscretions committed by the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, with whom he was most conversant, by frequently assisting them in the care of their flocks. From these circumstances, they treated Joseph with contempt, withheld from him the common offices of civility, and made it their constant study to perplex and torment him.

But what completed the envy and resentment of Joseph's brethren, or rather produced an irreconcilable hatred, was, his innocently relating to them two dreams, the explanations of which seemed to portend his own future greatness. The substance of the first of these dreams was, "that as he was binding sheaves with his bre-

thren in the field, his sheaf arose, and stood upright, while their sheaves round about fell down, and, as it were, made obeisance to his." This dream being considered by his brethren as an indication of his pride and ambition, their malice was greatly increased, but still more so when they heard the substance of the second dream. Behold, says he, *the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.* When Joseph related this last dream his father was present, on which the good old man, either to appease the anger of his other sons, or check that presumption, which in young minds so naturally arises from good omens, reprimanded him in these words, *Shall I, and thy brethren, come to bow down ourselves to thee, to the earth.* But though Jacob thought proper to reprimand his son Joseph for the reason here assigned, yet, in his own mind he thought there was something very ominous in the dreams, and that they were predictions of events that would sometime or other come to pass.

After Joseph had related these dreams to his brethren (notwithstanding the reprimand given him by his father) instead of their hatred being abated, they grew every day more and more exasperated; so that they resolved at length to cut him off, and only waited for a convenient opportunity for effecting their purposes.

Some time after this Jacob, having purchased some land near Shechem, sent all his sons (Joseph

† Whatever was the quality of this coat, it is certain that it was composed of various colours; and as such garments were in high esteem among the eastern nations, and worn by persons of the greatest distinction, this party-coloured dress distinguished him above his brethren, and gave rise to their jealousy and hatred.

An ingenious French writer (who has written a dissertation on this subject, which may be found translated in the fifth volume of the Christian's Magazine, p. 59.) observes, "that though it is not expressly said, yet we may gather

from the circumstances attending this robe, that Jacob, in giving it to his son, exempted him from the employments in which his brethren were occupied; and, accordingly, we do not see him, after this gift, keep sheep with his brethren: he stayed at home to comfort his father, as Benjamin did afterwards; but with this difference, the one only succeeded the other. The patriarchs bore an equality with kings, enjoyed the same honours with them, and gave those honours to such of their sons as they thought fit to distinguish."

(Joseph excepted) to keep their flocks there. After being absent a long time, and no intelligence received of them by Jacob, he was very anxious for their welfare, fearing lest the inhabitants of the land should revenge on them the loss of their countrymen, who had been put to death by Jacob's sons. To remove these disagreeable apprehensions he ordered Joseph to go to Shechem, and enquire after the health and welfare of his brethren, and return with all convenient expedition.

Joseph, in obedience to his father's commands, set out for Shechem, which was about sixty miles distant from the place where his father now dwelt. When he came within some distance of Shechem, he happened to meet a stranger, of whom he made enquiry after his brethren. The stranger told him, they had removed from Shechem some time, and were gone to a place called Dothan, about twenty miles farther to the north. Joseph accordingly hastened to Dothan; and no sooner did his brethren see him approaching than their old malice revived, and they determined to embrace this opportunity of destroying him. *Behold, (says one of them to the rest) this dreamer cometh: Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, some evil beast has devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams.*

This horrid design would certainly have been carried into execution had it not been for the interposition of Reuben, who used the most forcible arguments to dissuade them from embroiling their hands in the blood of their brother §. As they were, however, determined to shew some instance of their resentment, Reuben proposed that they should cast Joseph into the next pit, with a design, no doubt, of taking him out privately and conveying him safe to his father. This proposition being approved of by the rest of the brethren, as soon as Joseph came up to them, they immediately seized him, and, after taking off his party-coloured garment, threw him into a pit, which at that time happened to be dry. As soon as this was done Reuben withdrew, in order to contrive some means for rescuing his brother, whilst the rest, insensible of remorse for the deed they had committed, sat down, and regaled themselves with such provisions as the place afforded. They were satisfied in their minds that their base ends would soon be answered, and that Joseph must inevitably perish in the pit for the want of food. But the

eye of Omnipotence beheld his distress, and interposed in his behalf; for as Reuben had already been the means of preventing his immediate death; so Judah now became the means of delivering him out of the pit.

It happened that while they were regaling themselves, they espied at a distance a caravan of Ishmaelites, who were travelling from Mount Gilead into Egypt with spices and other merchandize. The sight of these furnished Judah with a thought in what manner he might secure his brother Joseph from certain death, and at the same time answer their ends by getting him totally removed. As the caravan approached he urged the iniquity of being instrumental to the destruction of their own brother, by which they would contract an eternal stain of guilt. He therefore advised them to sell him to the Ishmaelites, by which means they would not only save his life, but likewise promote their own interest. This proposal being universally approved of, Joseph was taken out of the pit, and sold to the merchants for twenty pieces of silver ||; and the merchants, on their arrival in Egypt, sold him again to Potiphar, one of the king's chief officers, and captain of his guards.

Reuben, who was absent while this circumstance happened, came soon after to the pit, in order to assist his brother in making his escape; but, astonished at not finding him there, he ran hastily to his brethren, rent his clothes, and upbraided himself as the cause of his being lost: *The child, said he, is not, and whither shall I go?* In short, he bewailed himself to such a degree, that his brethren, in order to mitigate his grief, told him in what manner they had disposed of him; upon which Reuben, finding it impossible now to recover him, joined with the rest, in forming a tale for their father which might take from them all suspicion of their being instrumental to the loss of his beloved Joseph.

To effect this purpose, they killed a kid, and dipping Joseph's coat into the blood, took it to their father, telling him they had found it in the field, and were fearful it was their brother's. *This (said they) have we found, know now whether it be thy son's coat, or no.*

The good old patriarch no sooner saw the coat, than he was convinced to whom it belonged, and not suspecting that any human hand could be guilty of such unnatural cruelty as to murder him, concluded that he had been unhappily devoured by some wild beast. This loss was the most

§ It is reasonable to suppose that the principal motive which induced Reuben to intercede in behalf of his brother was, to procure a reconciliation with his father, they having been long at variance on account of Reuben's misconduct in laying with Bilhah, his father's concubinary wife. He knew that Jacob loved Joseph, and that he would never forgive those who should take away his life; and as it is probable his father had not spoken to him for some time, so he doubted not but he should regain his affections by saving the life of his favourite Joseph.

The speech which Josephus puts into the mouth of Reuben when dissuading his brethren from murdering Joseph, is to the following effect: "It were an abominable wickedness, said he, to take away the life even of a stranger, but to destroy a kinsman and a brother, and in that brother a father likewise with grief, for the loss of so good and so hopeful a son.—Bethink yourselves, if any thing can be more diabolical. Consider, that there is an all-seeing

God, who will be the avenger as well as the witness of this horrid murder. Bethink yourselves, I say, and repent of your barbarous purpose. You must never expect to commit this flagitious villainy, and the Divine vengeance not overtake you; for God's providence is every where, in the wilderness as well as in the city; and the horrors of a guilty conscience will pursue you wherever you go. But, put the case your brother had done you some wrong; yet, is it not our duty to pass over the offences of our friends? When the simplicity of his youth may justly plead his excuse, his brothers certainly, of all men living, should be his friends and guardians, rather than his murderers; especially when the ground of all your quarrel is this, that God loves your brother, and your brother loves God." Josephus, lib. II. chap. 3.

|| This was to the amount of about forty-seven shillings sterling. A very low price indeed! But probably no more was asked, that the merchants might not hesitate at making the purchase.

most severe he had ever sustained. When his beloved Rachel died, it was in a natural way; but Joseph (according to his present apprehension) is, by a savage animal, barbarously torn in pieces before his time. His grief, therefore, knew no bounds; he rent his cloathes, put on sackcloth, and mourned for his beloved son many days: nay, so excessive was his affliction, that when his children in general endeavoured to comfort him, it availed nothing, and all the answer he made them was, that he could only cease to mourn when he should follow him in the path of mortality*.

In conformity to the Sacred Historian, we must here make a short digression from the farther transactions of Joseph, in order to admit some occurrences which are materially connected with the History, and, therefore must not be suffered to pass unnoticed†.

Some time before Joseph was sold into Egypt, Judah (his father's son by Leah,) and who had been the means of saving his brother's life, married a Canaanitish woman, named Shuah, by whom he had three sons, viz. Er, Onan, and Shelah.

In process of time, when Er, his eldest son, grew up to years of maturity, he took him a wife whose name was Tamar; but Er, being naturally of a very wicked disposition, the Almighty was pleased to cut him off before he had any children by his wife. In consequence of this Judah (agreeable to the custom of the country) advised Onan, his second son, to marry his brother's widow, in order to preserve the succession of his family. Onan seemingly obeyed his father's orders, but not brooking the thoughts that any of his children should inherit his brother's name (which must have been the case had Tamar borne him any) he took a very wicked method of avoiding it, for which offence he was (as his brother had been before him) punished with sudden death.

Shelah, the third son, being as yet too young for marriage, Judah desired his daughter-in-law Tamar to retire to her father's house, and there remain a widow, till his son became of proper age, at which time he would make him her husband.

* What an affecting idea is here conveyed to the mind of the reader! The hoary patriarch rends his clothes, covers his aged body with sackcloth, and refuses to be comforted. Thus Achilles in Homer expresses his grief, on receiving the news of Patroclus's death:

With furious hands he spread
The scorching ashes on his graceful head;
His purple garments, and his golden hairs,
Those he deforms with dust, and these with tears.

POPE.

† Though the past and following events seem to be connected by the sacred writer, yet the marriage of Judah certainly took place long before Joseph was sold into Egypt; and, in all probability, a short time after Jacob's return from his uncle Laban.

‡ That veils were not peculiar to harlots, but worn by the most modest women in those times, there is not the least doubt; yet as harlots were not then allowed to enter into cities, they usually sat in the public ways, and covered their faces with a veil, in order to conceal their infamy; and some assert that the veils they wore differed from those used

Tamar obeyed her father-in-law's commands, and waited till Shelah was come to man's estate; but finding no signs of his intending to fulfil his promise, she determined on revenge for her disappointment, which she effected by the following stratagem.

Shuah, Judah's wife, had been some time dead, and as soon as the usual time of mourning was expired, he went, accompanied by a particular friend, to Timnath, in order to participate of the accustomed amusements of sheep-shearing.

Tamar, having received previous intelligence of his intended excursion, and the time of his going, threw off her widow's habit, and dressing herself like a courtesan, she threw a veil‡ over her face, and then placed herself between two ways through one of which she knew Judah must necessarily pass in his road to Timnath.

As soon as Judah saw her he took her to be what she appeared, and accordingly, in a very familiar manner, paid his addresses to her. Previous, however, to any farther intimacy, she insisted upon having some reward for her compliance, which he readily agreed to, and promised to send her a kid; but she having a farther design upon him, demanded a pledge for the performance of his promise, which was, his signet§, his bracelet, and his staff. Judah readily complying with this request, they retired together, the consequence of which was that Tamar soon after proved with child.

Agreeable to the promise made by Judah to Tamar, previous to their intercourse, the former sent his friend Hirah (for that was his name) with a kid to redeem his pledge; but when he came to the place the woman was gone, nor could he, upon the strictest enquiry, learn that any such person as he described had been ever there. This circumstance greatly perplexed Judah, who, upon cool reflection, thought it most prudent to let her go with the pledges, fearing if he should make farther search after her, it might injure his reputation.

About three months after this Judah received intelligence that his daughter-in-law had played the harlot, and that she was certainly with child. Enraged at her incontinency, he ordered her to be brought forth, and, according to the laws of the country, publicly burnt.||

Tamar,

by modest women. Tamar assumed that character, most probably, to engage Shelah, who was her betrothed husband, and who she might expect would come with his father; but, being disappointed of him, she gratified Judah, in order to be again taken into the family.

§ The word here translated a *signet* should have been a ring, which ornaments were then worn according to their different ranks. At that time there could be no occasion for signets, it being most probable that writing was not then known. By the word *bracelets* is generally understood a girdle of twisted silk, which either hung from the neck, or was fastened round the waist somewhat in the form of a child's sash.

|| It may appear strange that Judah should have such authority as to order this punishment to be inflicted on his daughter-in-law Tamar. But it is to be observed, that the ancients supposed every man to be judge or chief magistrate in his own family; so that though Tamar was a Canaanite, yet, as she married into Judah's family, and brought disgrace upon it, she necessarily lay under the cognizance of him, who may be supposed, from what followed, to have suspended the sentence, till he had made farther enquiry into the nature of her offence.

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Tamar, instead of being alarmed at this dreadful sentence pronounced against her, only sent the pledge to Judah, and with them this message, "That the man to whom those belonged was the very person by whom she was with child."

Judah, struck with confusion at the sight of the pledge he so well knew, and reflecting on the injury he had done Tamar in not fulfilling the promise of giving her his son in marriage, he acknowledged her to be less culpable in the whole affair than himself. *She hath, said he, been more righteous than I**. Tamar's ends were answered in this stratagem, for Judah immediately took her home to his house, but never after had any intercourse with her.

When the time of Tamar's delivery came, she was brought-to-bed of twins, whose births were attended with these singular circumstances. One of them having put forth his hand, the midwife immediately tied round it a scarlet thread, in order to distinguish him as the first-born; but the child having withdrawn his hand, the other made its way, and came first into the world. This occasioned his name to be called Pharez, which signifies *breaking forth*: the other was called Zarah, which implies *He ariseth*, alluding to the sign he gave of his coming by putting forth his hand.

What farther circumstances occurred, after this, relative to Tamar, we are not informed; but it is reasonable to suppose that she continued the remainder of her life in the house of Judah, and that she lived the whole time in a state of widowhood.

Having, with the sacred historian, mentioned the before-mentioned particulars relative to Judah and his family, we shall, in like manner, now resume the history of Joseph, and relate the various adventures and enterprizes that befell him during his residence in Egypt.

From the time that Joseph had first admission into Potiphar's family, he conducted himself with the greatest diligence and fidelity. By his faithful services he so obtained the favour of his master, that after some time, he not only dismissed him from every laborious employment, but made him superintendant of his whole property, and committed the charge of his house solely to his care and direction.

Joseph, being then appointed principal manager of his master's affairs both within doors and

without, the Lord was pleased to bestow a blessing on the house of the Egyptian, who, by means of Joseph, flourished exceedingly, and being sensible of the cause of his very singular success, daily increased in his good offices towards his faithful servant.

Thus circumstanced, Joseph had reason to hope for a comfortable life, though sold to slavery; and to expect, in time, his liberty as a reward for his truth and fidelity. But it pleased the Almighty farther to exercise his faith and patience, in order to prepare him for a still brighter display of his grace and goodness towards his chosen people.

Joseph was now about twenty-seven years of age, of a comely form, beautiful complexion, and winning deportment. These united charms not only engaged the attention, but also excited the love, of his master's wife, who, when all tacit tokens to draw the youth into an indulgence of her unlawful flame failed, was so fired by her eager passion, that she broke through every rule of decency, and, in plain terms, courted him to her bed. But how great was her surprize, when, instead of a ready compliance, as she probably expected, she found herself not only denied, but likewise severely reprimanded for her dissolute and illegal passion! *Behold, said he, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand. There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me, but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? †*

But this repulse, sufficient to have filled with shame a mind not entirely lost to honour and virtue, had no effect on this lewd woman, who determined still, if possible, to obtain her ends. After making several other fruitless attempts, at length a favourable opportunity offered for accomplishing her wishes. It happened one day that Potiphar was engaged abroad on some particular business, and all the servants, except Joseph, were employed about their work in the adjoining fields. In the course of the day (having properly prepared herself for the purpose) Joseph's mistress called him to her apartment, which he had no sooner entered, than she addressed herself to him in a language calculated to steal the soul from virtue, and melt the coldest continence into the warmest desires ‡. But Joseph's integrity was not to be shaken. Though her arguments were enforced with all the blandishments

* He does not say Tamar was more holy or chaste, but more righteous or just; that is, Judah, not keeping his promise in marrying her to Shelah, provoked her to lay this trap for him, resolving, since he would not let her have children by Shelah, she would have them by him. Thus, though she may be deemed more wicked in the sight of God, she appeareth more just in the opinion of Judah.

† This answer was truly noble, and is highly worthy of imitation: it speaks a mind whose passions are in subjection to the ruling principle of reason and conscience; a mind that had the most delicate sentiments of honour, and the most lively impressions of religion. His honest heart startles at the thought of committing so foul a crime as adultery; and the ingratitude and breach of trust with which it would have been accompanied in him, presents it to his mind in the blackest colours; so that these virtuous sentiments concurring with his awful reverence of the Supreme Being, who beholds

and judges all the actions of the sons of men, enabled him to repel this violent assault with the utmost horror and indignation. This is an example of the greatest probity and inflexible integrity; an example worthy the highest commendation. Joseph was then a servant in a strange country: he was tempted by an imperious woman: if he complied, he would be sure of concealments and rewards; if he resisted, he must expect to be accused and treated as a criminal, be deprived of his place, of his liberty, of his fame, and perhaps of his life too. These are weighty considerations; but he prefers chains, ignominy, and even death itself, to the crime of committing so heinous an action, and sinning against God.

‡ Josephus says, that Potiphar's wife took the opportunity of a certain festival (to which all the family were gone except she and Joseph) to tempt him; that, feigning herself sick,

dishments of art, they made not the least impression on him. On the contrary, he again expostulated § with her on the heinousness of the crime, begging her not to desire him to commit an act which must be destructive to him, and disgraceful to her. But all his reasonings were of none effect: instead of her passion being allayed, it was farther inflamed, and at length, breaking through all decency, she caught him by his cloak, and attempted to compel him to compliance. He struggled with his mistress for some time, and finding he had no other way of escaping, he slipped himself from his garment, which he left in her hand, and precipitately fled.

Fired with resentment at the supposed indignity, and fearful of the disgrace that would attend the discovery of her shameful passion, she resolved to shield herself by laying a malicious accusation against Joseph. Accordingly, she began by making a most horrid outcry, which immediately brought in all the servants, who were within hearing, to her assistance. As soon as they entered the room, she shewed them Joseph's cloak, and at the same time thus vehemently exclaimed: *See, said she, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us: he came in unto me to lie with me.* And farther to engage them in her cause when the affair should come to examination, she craftily added, *And I cried with a loud voice, and when he heard it, he left his garment with me and fled.* Having then prepared the servants to confirm her declaration, she laid the cloak by her, in order to produce it as an evidence against Joseph when his master should return.

By the time Potiphar came home, she had dressed up the story so well, and expressed the pretended indignity put upon her by the Hebrew servant (as she called him) with such an air of resentment, that he made no doubt of the truth of her tale. The credulous husband, little suspecting his wife's treachery, was particularly prepossessed with the circumstance of the cloak, and therefore, without making the least enquiry into the merits of the cause, immediately committed Joseph to the king's prison.

Though the innocent Joseph was thus persecuted, in consequence of his base and treacherous mistress, and was thereby bereft both of friends and relations, yet he was not without that Divine friend who had hitherto protected him. He had not been long in prison before his virtu-

ous and obliging deportment gained him the peculiar favour of the keeper, inasmuch that he not only entrusted him with the management of the affairs belonging to the prison, but also with the custody of the prisoners themselves.

Some time after Joseph's confinement, it happened that two persons of note (namely, the king's cup-bearer and his chief baker) were, for some offence or other*, committed to the same prison, and being delivered to the care of Joseph, he attended them in person, and, by that means, an intimacy between them was soon established.

Joseph going one morning to their apartment, as he was accustomed to do, found them both in a very pensive and melancholy situation. On enquiring the cause of this sudden change, they told him, that each had (the preceding night) a very extraordinary dream; and that they were uneasy on account of being in a place, where they could not have a person to interpret them. To allay their superstitious humour in trusting to diviners and soothsayers, Joseph told them, that the interpretation of dreams did not depend upon rules of art; but, if there was any certainty in them it must proceed from a Divine inspiration. Having said this, he desired that each would relate the particulars of what they had dreamt, and he would give them his opinion with respect to the interpretation.

The cup-bearer told his dream first, the substance of which was, as follows: "That in his sleep he fancied he saw a vine, with three branches, which, all on a sudden, budded, then blossomed, and at length brought forth ripe grapes: that he held Pharaoh's cup in his hand, pressed the juice into the same, and gave it to the king, who, as usual, took it and drank." This dream Joseph interpreted thus: "The three branches, says he, denote three days, within which Pharaoh will restore thee to thy place, and thou shalt, as usual, give him to drink, according to the duties of thy office." He then told the cup-bearer that, if his interpretation proved true, he hoped he would, in his prosperity, remember him, and recommend his case to the king, since the truth was, he had been fraudulently taken from his own country, and thrown into prison, without having been guilty of the least offence.

The Baker, hearing so happy an interpretation of the cup-bearer's dream, was the more ready to relate his, which was to this effect: "That while

sick, she, by that means, decoyed him into her apartment, and then addressed him in words to the following effect: "Respect, said she, for my rank, and pity for my passion, ought to have prevented the repulse you have given me. You should have saved my blushes by conceiving my meaning, and preventing those expressions I now recollect with shame. You may, however, by your present behaviour, induce me to pardon what is past. I have counterfeited indisposition to evince my affection, and how much I prefer you to those distinguished characters with whom I have acquaintance. My passion remains with increased ardor; therefore, beware of a second refusal, lest it should draw on you my keenest resentment, and cause me to lay such an accusation against you to my husband, that no arguments of yours will persuade him to disbelieve."

§ The substance of Joseph's second expostulation with his mistress, as related by Josephus, is to this effect: "What felicity, said he, can a temporary pleasure bestow where pain and remorse are its immediate consequences? Can

"that be deemed a gratification which is productive of regret? Nuptial pleasures are innocent, but adulterous indulgencies with a servant would render you contemptible indeed. Endeavour to possess a good conscience, as that will always secure you happiness, and shun a secret act of infamy, which would render the remainder of your life truly miserable."

|| She did not call Joseph by his own name, but that of the people to whom he belonged. This she did in order to increase her husband's rage against him, the Egyptians and Hebrews being, at this time, inveterate enemies to each other.

* The authors of the Universal History are of opinion, that the crime of which these men were accused was that of having embezzled the king's treasure; but the Targum says, they had attempted to poison him. Whatever were their crimes, they must have been very great persons with respect to their birth; for, according to Diodorus Siculus, none but the sons of the chief priests were admitted into those offices.

while, as he thought, he had on his head three wicker-baskets, in the uppermost of which were several kinds of baked meats for the king's table, the birds came, and eat them out of the basket." The interpretation Joseph gave of this dream was, "that the three baskets (even as the three branches had done) signified three days; but that, in the space of that time, the king, having enquired into his conduct, and found him guilty, would order him to be first beheaded, and afterwards his body to be hanged on a gibbet, for the fowls of the air to devour his flesh †.

As Joseph had foretold, so it came to pass; for, three days after this, the cup-bearer was restored, and the Baker hanged. The cup-bearer, however, proved very ungrateful to Joseph, in not using the least endeavours to get his release, and he might probably have continued in prison the remainder of his life, had it not been for the following incident.

When Joseph had been more than two years in prison, it happened that Pharaoh, the king, had, in one night, two very portendous dreams, which gave him the more uneasiness because none of the Egyptian Magi ‡ (whom he consulted the next morning) could give him the least explanation of their meaning. While the king was in this state of perplexity on account of his dreams, he received some agreeable intelligence from his cup-bearer, who, recollecting Joseph, told him, that while he and the chief baker were under his majesty's displeasure in prison, each of them, in the same night, had a dream, which a young man, an Hebrew, then in prison with them, interpreted exactly and as the events happened; and that in his opinion, he had a talent that way much superior to any that had been hitherto consulted.

Pharaoh was so pleased with this intelligence, and so anxious to have his dreams explained, that he immediately dispatched a messenger to the prison, with orders to bring Joseph before him. Accordingly, after having shaved himself, and put on his best attire, he left the prison, and being conducted to the palace was immediately introduced to the king, who, after a short time, related to him his dreams as follow: "That, as he was walking on the banks of the river §, he saw seven fat kine come out of it, and feed on the meadow; after which seven others, exceeding lean, and frightful to behold, came also to the river, and devoured the seven fat kine. That after this he dreamt again, and fancied he saw seven full ears of corn, proceeding all from the

same stalk, which were, in like manner with the kine, devoured by seven others that were blasted and withered."

When the king had finished relating his dreams, Joseph (after giving him to understand that it was by the assistance || of God alone he was enabled to be an interpreter of dreams) told him, "that the seven kine, and seven ears of corn, signified the same thing, and the repetition of the dream only denoted the certainty of the event; that, therefore, as the lean kine seemed to eat up the fat, and the withered ears of corn to consume the full and flourishing; so, after seven years of great plenty, other seven years of extreme famine would succeed, inasmuch that the remembrance of plenty would be lost throughout the land of Egypt."

After Joseph had thus interpreted the king's dreams, he advised him to improve the hints given in them, by appointing some wise and prudent person over his whole kingdom, who should take care to build granaries, and appoint officers under him, in every province, and that these officers should collect, and lay up, a fifth part of each plentiful year's produce, that a proper supply might be had during the succeeding years of famine.

This careful and prudent advice was highly approved of by the king, who, struck with the extraordinary foresight and sagacity of Joseph, did not long hesitate in fixing the person thus recommended; for, turning first to his subjects, and then to Joseph, he thus respectively addressed them: "Can we, says he, find such a one " as this is? a man in whom the Spirit of God " is. Forasmuch as God has shewed thee all " this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou " art: thou shalt be over my house; and according to thy word shall all my people be " ruled: only in the throne will I be greater " than thou."

Having said this, Pharaoh appointed Joseph his deputy over the land of Egypt, and immediately invested him with the ensigns of that high station. He took the ring from his own finger, and put it on Joseph's; caused him to be clothed in a robe of fine linen, and put a golden chain about his neck. He ordered him to ride in the chariot next to his; and that wherever he went heralds should go before, to give notice of his coming to the people, who should shew their subjection to him by bending the knee as he passed.

Pharaoh having thus bestowed on Joseph the greatest

† It may appear strange that the sacred historian should mention the baker's being first beheaded, and afterwards hanged. But it is to be observed that this practice was common at that time. Hence Jeremiah says, *princes were hanged up by their hands*, intimating that their heads had been previously cut off. See Lamentations v. 12. Also 1 Sam. xxxi. 9. 10.

‡ The magicians, or interpreters of dreams, were, at that time, a regular body of people in Egypt, and always consulted with respect to their pretended knowledge of future events. Their method of interpretation was from an attentive consideration of the symbols or images that appeared in the dream. Thus, the best they could pretend was no more than conjecture; but they always gave their answers to whatever questions they were asked in such ambiguous words that they could hardly be detected.

§ The river here mentioned was the Nile, so much celebrated in ancient history.

This river has its rise in Numidia, and after running many miles northward through a country scorched with the violent heat of the sun, it enters Upper Egypt with great force, and passes over a cataract or broken rock. From hence it continues its course still north, and receiving the addition of many other rivers, it falls over another cataract, and then continues its course to the Lower-Egypt as far as Grand Cairo, after which it divides itself into three branches, in the form of the Greek letter Δ, and then empties itself into the Mediterranean Sea. Once every year it overflows the greater part of Lower Egypt, and from that proceeds either scarcity or plenty. If the water rises too high, scarcity ensues, because it lies too long on the ground; and if too low, then there is not a sufficiency to fertilize the soil.

|| The answer Joseph gave the king when he first asked him to interpret his dreams was exceeding modest, and much of

greatest power and highest honours, in order to attach him more strongly to his interest, and make him forget the very thoughts of ever returning to his own country, changed his name from Joseph to Zaphnath-paaneah *; soon after which he procured him an honourable alliance, by marriage, with Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest, or prince of On †.

Joseph's prediction began now to be fulfilled; and the plenteous years having commenced, he entered upon the duties of the high office with which he had been invested. He made a progress throughout the whole kingdom, built granaries in all the principal places, and appointed proper officers to collect and lay up the stipulated quantity of provisions. The same method he invariably pursued every season of the fruitful years, till at length he had amassed such quantities of corn as even to exceed computation.

During the seven years of plenty, Joseph had two sons by his wife Asenath, the first of whom he called *Manasseh*, intimating that God had made him forget all his toils; and the other he called *Ephraim*, because he had made him fruitful in the land of his affliction.

The seven years of plenty being expired, those of dearth commenced, according to Joseph's prediction, and the famine was not only spread throughout the land of Egypt, but also the neighbouring countries. But through Joseph's provident care, under the blessing of Divine Providence, Egypt was so well furnished with provisions, as not only to supply its own inhabitants, but also foreigners, with bread and other necessities of life. The king referred all who applied to him for these articles to Joseph, who opened the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians and others, in such quantities, and at such rates, as seemed to him most just and equitable.

The famine having penetrated as far as the land of Canaan, and particularly affected that part of the country where Jacob resided, he, hearing there was corn to be bought in Egypt, sent ten of his sons thither for that purpose. On their arrival they were directed to apply to Joseph for an order, whom they no sooner approached, than they bowed themselves before him ‡, as a token of reverence to his dignified office.

Joseph, at first sight, knew his brethren, but did not chuse, at present, to make himself known

to them, intending to take this opportunity of punishing them for the ill-treatment he had received at their hands. The better to effect his purpose, instead of speaking to them himself, he appointed an interpreter, who, by his directions, with a severe look, and angry tone of voice, asked them, from whence they came? They answered, "From the land of Canaan to buy provisions;" upon which he charged them with being spies, who came thither for no other purpose but to discover the weakness of the country. They replied, that they came with no other intent than purely to buy corn for their numerous family; and that they were all the sons of one man §, who, once, indeed, had twelve, but that the youngest was left at home, and the next to him was dead.

But Joseph still insisted they were spies, and, to put their honesty to the test, made this proposition: "That since, as they said, they had a younger brother at home, some one of them should be dispatched to bring him, whilst the rest should be kept in confinement till his arrival; and if they did not assent to this he should consider them in no other light than that of spies and enemies." Having said this, he ordered them all to prison, there to remain till they should give a proper answer to the matter proposed.

On the third day of their confinement Joseph sent for them again, and shewing a more pleasant countenance than he had yet done, told them, (by means of his interpreter) that as himself feared God, and was desirous of acting justly by them, he was unwilling that their family should want provision, or that they themselves should suffer, if innocent. He therefore proposed, "That one of them should be confined as an hostage for the rest, while they returned with the corn for the family; and that, when they came again, and brought their youngest brother with them, the one confined should be immediately released, and all of them considered as men of honesty and integrity."

Being reduced to a state of extremity, and knowing it was in vain to remonstrate with one, under whose immediate power they were, they unanimously (though, no doubt, with reluctance) agreed to this proposal. The interpreter was at this time absent, and (supposing no one else understood their language) they, imagining their present distressed situation was a punishment for their

the same nature with that given by Daniel to king Nebuchadnezzar. See Daniel ii. 28, 29. He elevates the monarch's mind to the first cause of the dreams which so troubled him, and engages his attention by making him hope he should give him an answer, of which God himself was the author: *It is not, says he, in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.* Which was as much as to say, "I have no more skill than those already consulted; from God alone the interpretation must proceed; and He, I trust, will give a favourable one to your dreams."

* The generality of interpreters are of opinion, that this is a Coptic word, and implies a *revealer of secrets*, alluding to Joseph's having interpreted Pharaoh's dreams. It was customary, at this time, for princes to give foreigners a new name, to denote their naturalization, to take away all invidious distinction and declare them worthy of their most intimate favour and protection.

† On was a famous city in Egypt, situated between the Nile and the Arabian Gulph, about twenty miles from Memphis, the metropolis of the kingdom. Here was cele-

brated an annual festival in honour of the sun, from which it was afterwards called *Heliopolis*. The word we translate *priest* may signify one who ministers at the altar, or one who governs in civil affairs: priests were antiently the chief men of the kingdom; for kings themselves were priests.

‡ This manner of salutation was common in their own country, but not in use among the Egyptians: a sufficient proof that Jacob's family had little or no acquaintance with the inhabitants of the neighbouring kingdoms. But by using the customary form of their family, they fulfilled the dreams of Joseph (as far as they had any relation to themselves) and, no doubt, brought those dreams to Joseph's remembrance.

§ This part of their answer was certainly very pertinent, as it was not probable that a father would have sent his sons, and much less all of them, in one company, upon so dangerous an expedition: nor, that one particular person, or family, would have formed a design against so capital a kingdom as that of Egypt.

their cruel treatment of their brother, began (in Joseph's presence) to condemn each other for their barbarous conduct. "Justly, said they, do we now suffer for our cruelty to our brother, to whom we refused mercy, though he begged it in the anguish of his soul; therefore God is just in sending upon us this distress." Reuben (who was not so culpable as the rest) told them, that all this mischief might have been prevented had they listened to his counsel, and not acted so inhumanly to their innocent brother, for whose sake it was no more than what they might expect, that vengeance, at one time or other, would certainly overtake them.

Though Joseph could counterfeit the stranger in his looks, his mien and his voice, yet he still retained the brother in his heart. The confusion and distress of his brethren awakened all his fraternal tenderness, and he was obliged to withdraw from their presence to give a vent to his passions. In a short time, however, he returned, and after commanding Simeon to be bound in their presence, he sent him to prison. Having done this he set all the rest at liberty, and ordered the officer, who distributed the corn, to supply them with what they wanted, and at the same time (unknown to them) to put each man's money into the mouth of his sack.

These orders being punctually obeyed, they set out for Canaan, and at the close of their first day's journey, met with a circumstance they little expected. One of them opening his sack to give his ass provender, observed his money in the mouth of it, which, on examination, appeared to be the case with all the rest. This unexpected event gave them great uneasiness, and, looking confusedly at each other, they exclaimed, *What is this God hath done unto us?* They imagined it to be a plot concerted by the viceroy of Egypt, and that he intended, on their return, to make them slaves, by accusing them of theft.

Prosecuting their journey, they at length arrived at the habitation of their venerable parent, to whom they related all the particulars of their journey into the land of Egypt. They informed him of the treatment they had received from the viceroy: that he had accused them of being spies, and that they had no method of clearing themselves, but by leaving Simeon bound in prison, as a pledge, till they should return with Benjamin, on which terms alone their innocence could be justified.

The good old patriarch was sensibly affected at these melancholy tidings, and, in the affliction

of his soul, thus complained: "That one way or other, he had been deprived of his children; that Joseph was dead, Simeon was left in Egypt, and now they were going to take Benjamin from him likewise, which were things too heavy for him to bear."

Reuben, finding his father thus unhappily circumstanced, in order to mitigate his affliction, told him, he need not be apprehensive of any danger from the absence of Benjamin. He begged that he would put him under his protection, and at the same time assured him, that if he did not bring him safe back, he would readily agree to the loss of his own two sons for such defect.

But this proposal had little weight with Jacob, and instead of assuaging his grief, only contributed to augment it. Resolved, therefore, not to trust Benjamin with them, he answered Reuben as follows: *My son (said he) shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave*.*

In this state of doubt and perplexity did they spend their time, till the famine every day increasing, and their stock of provisions being nearly consumed, Jacob told his sons to go again into Egypt for a fresh supply; but at the same time took no notice of their obligation to the viceroy to bring with them their youngest brother.

Jacob's sons, knowing their departure without Benjamin would not only argue in them the greatest folly and rashness, but also expose them to the resentment of the viceroy, and at the same time thinking it impossible to obtain their father's consent, were reduced to the utmost dilemma. Reuben had already tried his efforts in vain: Judah, therefore, now addressed him in more positive terms, urging at once the absolute and indispensable necessity of taking Benjamin with them, "as the viceroy had most solemnly declared they should not so much as see his face if, on their return, he was not with them."

Jacob, being now put to his last shifts for the preservation of his favourite son Benjamin knew not how to act, and in the fullness of his soul, reproved his sons for having informed the viceroy they had a brother. In answer to this Judah told him, that what was said upon that head proceeded from the simplicity of their hearts: that he enquired so minutely into their circumstances and family, that they could not possibly avoid giving the information he required; and added, that they had little suspicion of his making so singular a demand.

Judah,

|| The Jewish Rabbies say, that Joseph determined to retain Simeon rather than any other, because it was he who threw him into the pit. This tradition is far from being improbable. It is certain that Reuben was desirous of saving Joseph, and Judah inclined to favour him; so that if Simeon had joined with them, their authority might have prevailed over the rest to save him. We may add to this, that Simeon was a violent man, as is evident from his barbarous treatment of the Shechemites; and that Joseph might think proper to detain him, as it would least afflict his father.

* Nothing can be more tender and picturesque than these words of the venerable patriarch. Still affected with the remembrance of his beloved Rachel, he cannot think of

parting with Benjamin, the only remaining pledge of that love, now Joseph, as he supposes, is no more; for, by her, he had only these two sons. We here seem, as it were, to behold the grey-headed venerable parent pleading with his sons; the beloved Benjamin standing by his side; impatient sorrow in their countenances, and, in his, all the feeling anxiety of paternal love. The pathetic and picturesque display of this scene reminds us of that beautiful passage in Homer, where Priam very affectionately laments the loss of his son Hector:

Thee, Hector, lost; thy loss (divinely grave)
Sinks my sad soul with sorrow to the grave.

POPE.

Judah, finding his father waver a little in his resolution, repeated the necessity of their going again into Egypt, and pressed him to consent to give up their brother Benjamin, solemnly promising that, at the hazard of his own life, he would take care, and return him safe into his hands. "Send the lad, said he, with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and those, and also our little ones: I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever."

From the strong importunities of Judah, and a proper reflection on the necessity of affairs, Jacob was at length induced to comply, and therefore delivered up to them his son Benjamin. But before their departure he advised them, since it *must be so*, to take a double quantity of money with them, lest there should have been some mistake made in the other that was returned, and the price of what they had already bought demanded. He likewise told them to take some such presents as the country afforded; and what, they imagined, would be most acceptable to the viceroy. Having said this, he entreated heaven for their safety, and then dismissed them with an aching heart, though fully resolved to acquiesce in God's good Providence, whatever might be the event.

On their arrival in Egypt, they immediately went to the king's principal granaries, and presented themselves before Joseph, who, seeing their brother Benjamin with them, gave orders to his steward to conduct them to his house, where he designed they should that day dine with him. They now began to have disagreeable apprehensions, fearing this might be a contrivance against them on account of the money which was returned in their sacks. They, therefore, before they entered the house, acquainted the steward with the whole affair; and to demonstrate their honesty, told him, that besides the money which they found returned, they had brought more with them to buy a fresh quantity of provision. The steward, having been let into the secret, and perceiving the concern they were in, desired them not to make themselves in the least uneasy. He told them, that what they found in their sacks they ought to look upon as a treasure sent from heaven: he owned that he himself had fairly received their money, and gave them assurance that they would never hear more of it. To convince them that they might rely on

what he said, he left them a short time, and then returned with their brother Simon unbond: after which he acquainted them that they were that day to dine with his master, and in the mean time shewed them all the tokens of civility due to welcome guests.

As the time was near at hand that Joseph was to come home to dinner, his brethren took care to have their present ready; and, on his entering the apartment, they gave it him in the most humble and submissive manner. He saluted them with the greatest cordiality, and made anxious enquiry concerning the health and welfare of their aged father. To which they submissively replied, *Thy servant, our father, is in good health; he is yet alive.*

Though Joseph addressed his brethren in general terms, his attention was principally fixed on his brother Benjamin, who was most near and dear to him. After enquiring of the rest if he was the youngest brother whom they had mentioned, without waiting for an answer, he saluted him in these words, *God be gracious unto thee, my son* ||. His passions were now raised to such a pitch, that, unable to contain the flood of tears that was ready to flow from his eyes, and fearing lest he should discover himself too soon, he retired into an adjoining apartment, and there gave a loose to his fraternal emotions. After a short time, having dried up his tears, and washed his face, that it might not appear he had wept, he returned to the company, and gave immediate orders for the provision to be served up.

In the room where the entertainment was provided were three tables; one for Joseph alone, on account of his dignity; another for his Egyptian guests, (who would never eat with the Hebrews*) and a third for his brethren.

These last were all placed in exact order according to their seniority, a circumstance which greatly surprized them, for (not knowing their brother Joseph) they could not conceive by what means he had obtained so perfect a knowledge of their respective ages.

During the entertainment Joseph behaved in the most courteous manner, not only to his brethren, but the whole company. He sent from his own table † messes to each of his brothers; but with this difference, that the one sent to Benjamin was five times larger than any of the rest ‡. This was another mystery they could not account for; however, they made themselves easy for the present, and enjoyed the repast which had been so bountifully prepared for them.

The

|| Joseph was the only brother of Benjamin by his mother Rachel. His calling him *son*, therefore, was only an appellation of courtesy used by superiors in saluting their inferiors, whom they styled sons, with respect to themselves, as fathers of the country.

* The dislike which the Egyptians took to the Hebrews did not arise, as some have imagined, from the latter eating animal food, but from their low degree in life, being shepherds, an employment, which, though esteemed by the Hebrews, was despised by the Egyptians.

† It was the custom among the ancients for all the provision to be placed on one table, and the master of the feast to distribute to every one his portion.

‡ Joseph certainly did this not only to shew his particular

regard to Benjamin, but also to observe whether the rest would look upon their younger brother with the same envious eye as they had formerly done upon himself. The custom of allotting the largest portion at the banquets of the ancients to any particular person, by way of preference, was practised in Homer's days, as appears from Agamemnon's speech to Idomeneus:

For this in banquets when the generous bowls
Restore our blood, and raise the warriors' souls,
Tho' all the rest with stated rules are bound.
Unmix'd, unmeasur'd are thy goblets crown'd.

The entertainment being over, Joseph's brethren took their leave, and made the necessary preparations for setting off, the next morning, to the land of Canaan, pleased with the thoughts of what had passed, and the satisfaction their aged parent would receive on their safe arrival. But Joseph had one more fright for them still in reserve. He ordered his steward, when he filled their sacks with corn, to return their money (as he had done before) but into Benjamin's sack not only to put his money, but the silver cup likewise, out of which himself was accustomed to drink §.

This being done, early the next morning they proceeded on their journey towards Canaan; but they had not got far when Joseph ordered his steward to pursue them, and upbraid them with ingratitude in having so basely requited his master's civility, as to steal away his cup.

The steward did as he was commanded, and having overtaken them, accused them of theft. Conscious of their innocence, they were not in the least affected at the charge. As a test of their integrity they reminded the steward of their bringing back the money which they found in their sacks in their former journey; and to obviate every suspicion of their being guilty of the accusation laid against them, they offered to stand search under the severest penalties: *With whomsoever of thy servants, said they, it may be found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's bond-men.*

The steward took them at their word, but softened the penalty, by fixing it, that the person on whom the cup should be found should be his servant, and the rest considered as blameless.

Impatient to prove their innocence, every one hastily unloaded his beast, and, as they opened their sacks, the steward searched them; when behold, to their great astonishment and surprize, the cup was found in the sack belonging to Benjamin. It was to no purpose for the poor youth to say any thing in his defence: upon such a demonstration none would believe him. As they were all concerned in the disgrace, they rent their cloathes, and, without attempting even to palliate the fact, loaded their asses, and, in a mournful manner, returned to the city.

Joseph had remained at home in expectation of their return, and no sooner did they approach

his presence than they immediately prostrated themselves before him. Joseph, without giving them time to speak a word in their defence, charged them with the fact, and reprimanded them for their folly in committing a theft, which it was totally out of their power to conceal. *What deed, says he, is this ye have done? Wot ye not, that such a man as I can certainly divine? ||*

In the midst of a general horror, Judah, in a very humble tone, addressed himself to Joseph in words to this effect: "We have nothing to offer in our defence; God hath detected our iniquity, and we must remain slaves with him in whose sack the cup was found." But Joseph interrupted him by declaring, that he could by no means do such injustice; for that he only who stole the cup should be his slave, while the rest, whenever they pleased, were at full liberty to return to their father.

Judah, encouraged by finding the viceroy somewhat softened, presumed farther to address him, which he did in the most submissive and pathetic terms. He acquainted him with the whole case between them and their father, in relation to their bringing Benjamin into Egypt, to take away the suspicion of their being spies. He very feelingly described their father's melancholy situation for the loss of his son Joseph; the extreme fondness he had for his son Benjamin; the difficulty they were under to prevail with him to trust him with them, insomuch that himself was forced to become security for his safe return; and that, if he should go home without him, his father's life was so wrapped up in the child, that he would certainly die with grief. To prevent, therefore, so melancholy a scene, he offered himself as an equivalent for his brother. *I pray thee, said he, let thy servant abide, instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brethren; for how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? **

This moving speech, and generous offer, so operated on the passions of Joseph, that he could no longer contain himself: the force of nature shook his frame, and obliged him to throw off all disguise. Ordering, therefore, the rest of the company to depart, that he might discover himself with more affectionate freedom, they were no sooner gone, than he burst into a flood of tears,

§ Joseph ordered this cup to be privately put into Benjamin's sack, in order to make a farther trial of his brethren's temper, and to see whether, moved with envy, they would give up Benjamin, or endeavour to assist him in his danger. It is not likely (as some have thought) that he really designed to have made a pretence for detaining Benjamin; or that he could be ignorant of his father's warm affection to his youngest son.

|| This was as much as to say, "You see by my office that I am one of the great ministers of state; while the other diviners are preferred only from the College of priests. As I am, therefore, so superior to them, could you be insensible that it was in my power to divine, or detect your robbery?"

* The speech Josephus puts into Judah's mouth on this occasion is pathetic, moving, and rhetorical. "We confess, says he, the crime imputed to our brother is of an heinous nature, and merits punishment; but as he is the younger of us, we request that our lives may atone for his. Confident, however, of the dignity of your mind, we still flatter ourselves with the hope that clemency will subdue resentment, and your natural benevo-

lence be awakened by our voluntary submission. Relieving our wants with bread, and mitigating the punishment of a criminal, proceed from the same noble source, Humanity! for preserving and sparing life are equal objects of mercy; and we shall be doubly indebted to you, not only for necessities to subsist on, but for existence itself. The Supreme Being has now presented you with an opportunity of exerting the most amiable virtues that adorn the human soul. Let it be known that you are as humane as liberal, and forgive injuries as well as confer favours. Charity is a gem that adorns nature, and clemency may be justly deemed the most brilliant jewel of the human mind. If there is merit in pardoning trivial errors, there must be celestial benignity, indeed, in forgiving atrocious crimes. We are not solicitous for ourselves, so much as for our father, whose affliction for the loss of this son will be inconceivable. Our lives we consider as but of little value, unless we are indebted for them to your goodness. Our father is aged, pious, and anxious for our safety; and pity it is that a person of such virtues should be exposed to future calamities. The news of our fate, with the infamy of the case, will

tears, and, looking earnestly at his brethren, pathetically exclaimed, *I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?* §.

Conscious guilt, at the very name of that Joseph whom they had so unnaturally treated, struck them dumb, as they now dreaded the power he had of resenting the injuries they had done him. But brotherly love overcame resentment, and banished every desire of revenge. Joseph, observing their confusion, bid them, in the most endearing manner, approach nearer to him, when he assured them, that he was the very brother they had sold into Egypt, and though he had assumed the dignity becoming his office, he still retained the tenderness of a brother. To remove all further apprehensions of danger, he told them, that their selling him into Egypt, was directed by an unforeseen Providence; and that they had no reason to be angry with themselves for doing it, since they were no more than the instruments in God's hand to bring about what his wife purpose had determined. That himself had no reason to resent it, since, by that means, he had been advanced to the honour and dignity of being governor of all Egypt. And, lastly, that neither his father, or any of his family, ought to murmur at it, since God appointed this method for the preservation of their lives ||.

Having said this, he told them that there were yet five years of the famine to come, and therefore he would advise them to hasten home, and, as soon as possible, bring their father, together with all the family, into Egypt. As an induce-

ment for them to leave their own country, he desired them, from him, to address their father to this effect: "that God had made him lord of all Egypt, and that therefore he must not defer coming; for he would provide Goshen* for the place of his habitation, and there would he carefully nourish not only him but all his family." He acknowledged that this relation must, of course, appear strange to his father; but that he certainly would not doubt the testimony of so many eye-witnesses; and above all, that he would not fail to believe what was told him by his favourite son Benjamin. He then threw himself upon Benjamin's neck, kissed him, and wept for joy; and having a little recovered himself, he treated all the rest with like tenderness. His brethren being thus convinced that a perfect reconciliation had taken place between them, took courage, and conversed with him in a manner very different to what they had done previous to this happy discovery.

Pharaoh, having received intelligence that Joseph's brethren were come into Egypt to buy corn, he sent for him, and told him, that since his father's family was so numerous, and the famine, as yet, not half over, his best way would be to send for them, and place them in what part of the country he thought fit; for that they should never want for provisions, or any other favour he could bestow. He likewise put him in mind to send them a fresh supply of corn, and whatever else he thought would be necessary in their journey; with chariots and waggons to bring

" will put a period to his existence. Your resentment, we
" acknowledge to be just, but let compassion for our aged
" parent plead in our favour. Apply our case to your
" own feelings: the very name of father is sacred, and
" sometimes assumed by God himself, who will certainly re-
" ward you with innumerable blessings for commiserating
" the case of the aged Jacob. Our lives are at the dispo-
" sal of your clemency or justice: by exerting the first, you
" will imitate the Divine Being; by using the second, you
" will evince your political prerogative. Your reputation
" will rise in proportion to the number of lives you save,
" and by pardoning our brother you give existence to a
" whole family. But if, most illustrious Sir, you remain
" inexorable, we only request to be all included in the
" punishment, the same as if we had been accomplices in
" the guilt. I might plead our brother's tender years, and
" total ignorance of life; but your candour will, no doubt,
" consider all the circumstances of our case; and, if the
" sentence should be for slavery, instead of death, the last
" thing I have to request is, that *I may undergo its ri-*
" *gour instead of my brother, being more capable than*
" *he of sustaining the fatigues of servitude.*"

§ There is certainly a distinguished beauty in this interrogation; and the transition is finely wrought. The soul of Joseph was so full of filial affection for his father, that, before he had finished his sentence, he enquired after him, though, but a short time before, they had told him he was alive. And how must such an abrupt declaration affect his brothers! No wonder they were dumb for some time with astonishment, and unable to answer the question asked.

Mr. Pope, in a note on Homer's *Odyssey*, observes, That the discovery of Ulysses to Telemachus has some resemblance with that of Joseph's discovering himself to his brethren; and it may not, says he, be disagreeable to see how two such authors describe the same passion.

I am Joseph, I am your brother Joseph.

" *I am Ulysses; I, my son! am he!*"

And wept aloud—and fell on his brother's neck, and wept.

" *He wept abundant, and he wept aloud.*"

But it must be observed, that Homer falls infinitely short of Moses.—There is, indeed, in the whole history of Jo-

seph, a majestic simplicity in the relation, and such an affecting portrait of human nature, that it overwhelms us with vicissitudes both of joy and sorrow.

|| These passages point out to us the very noble and just ideas which Joseph entertained concerning the providence of God: but, besides this, we may observe a peculiar generosity and tenderness of temper in this apology to his brethren; wherein he endeavours to remove every uneasy apprehension from their minds. Good hearts are always averse to giving pain: the same benevolence of disposition, which makes them zealous to diffuse happiness, makes them tender of inflicting a momentary smart. Joseph was unwilling that his brethren should feel any alloy to their satisfaction which the present event afforded; and therefore he turned, as it were, from their view, the very thought and remembrance of their former unnatural behaviour to him, and directed their attention to reflections, which were equally comfortable and important.

Many of the heathens entertained right notions of an over-ruling Providence, as appears from the manner in which Homer represents Priam soothing Helen's grief.

" No crime of thine our present suffering draws;
" Not thou, but heaven's disposing will the cause,
" The gods these armies and this force employ,
" The Gods, averse, conspire the fate of Troy."

Iliad. iii. ver. 215.

To the same purpose Virgil:

" Nor beauteous Helena nor Paris blame,
" Her guilty charms, or his unhappy flame;
" The gods, my son, th' immortal gods destroy
" This glorious empire, and the tow'rs of Troy."

Æneid. ii. ver. 620.

* This was the most fruitful part of all Lower Egypt, especially for pasturage; and, therefore, the most commodious for those who were brought up shepherds and accustomed to a pastoral life. Besides this it was very conveniently situated, being but a small distance from the city where Pharaoh kept his court.

bring down their wives and children, and the best of their moveables.

It is little to be wondered at that Joseph should very readily obey the king's commands. Accordingly, he furnished them with a proper number of carriages for bringing their family and substance, together with a sufficient quantity of provision for their journey as well home as back again. He sent his father a present, consisting of ten asses laden with the choicest dainties Egypt afforded. To his brethren he gave each changes of raiment, but to Benjamin he gave five changes, together with three hundred pieces of silver. Having done this, Joseph dismissed his brethren, giving them, at the same time, a strict charge that they should not *fall out by the way* †.

Thus supplied, and thus circumstanced, the sons of Jacob, with hearts full of joy, prosecuted their journey to Canaan. As soon as their aged father saw them, his drooping spirits revived, more especially when he beheld his sons Benjamin and Simeon, whose return he had little expected. But when they informed him that his son Joseph was likewise alive, and described the great pomp and splendor in which he lived, the good old patriarch was affected indeed; and unable to bear so much good news at once, fainted in their arms.

When Jacob came again to himself, his sons shewed him the presents sent by Joseph, together with the carriages that were to carry him and his family into Egypt. The sight of these, with many particulars they related of their brother Joseph, revived his spirits; his doubts and fears vanished, and, in an ecstasy of joy, he exclaimed, *It is enough! Joseph, my son, is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.*

The necessary preparations being made, Jacob and his family left Hebron, and proceeded on their journey towards Egypt. It might be supposed that the old man's anxiety to see so dear a son, and for whom he had so long mourned, would have made him proceed with the greatest expedition; but parental affection gave way to religious duties. Being desirous of making proper acknowledgments to God for the benefits already received, as well as to implore his farther protection, he stopped at Beersheba, and there offered up sacrifices to the Lord. The reasons of his chusing this spot on the present occasion were, because it was the place where Abraham and Isaac had lived so long; and at the same time it was in the way to Egypt, being the utmost boundary of Canaan towards the south.

On the evening of the same day that Jacob had performed his religious duties at Beersheba, the Almighty appeared to him in a vision, bidding him not fear to go down into Egypt, since he would be with him and protect him, and in due time, bring his posterity out of it to take possession of the promised land. That

as to himself, he should live near his beloved Joseph, die in his arms, and have his eyes closed by his hand ‡.

Encouraged by this Divine promise, Jacob left Beersheba, and cheerfully pursued his journey towards Egypt, his sons taking with them their children and wives in the carriages which Joseph had sent for the purpose. They likewise took with them all their cattle and goods; and the whole number of souls descended from Jacob's loins amounted to three score and ten.

As soon as they came to the borders of Egypt, (and not far from the land of Goshen) Jacob dispatched his son Judah before them, in order to acquaint Joseph with their arrival. This intelligence was very agreeable to Joseph, who immediately ordered his chariot to be got ready, and, with a retinue suitable to his high station, hastened to meet his father, whom he congratulated on his safe arrival at a place where it was in his power to make him happy and comfortable during the remainder of his life. Words cannot describe the expressions of filial duty and paternal affection that took place on this occasion. Tears of joy plentifully flowed on both sides. While the son was contemplating the goodness of God in bringing him to the sight of his aged parent, the father, on the other hand, thought all his happiness on earth compleated in this interview; and, therefore, in the fullness of his soul, he exclaimed, *Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.*

These mutual endearments being over, and Joseph having paid his respects to the whole family, he told his father and brethren that he would go before and acquaint the king with their arrival. As he imagined Pharaoh would be desirous of seeing some of them, he gave them this caution: that in case he should ask of what occupation they were, their answer should be, that they were shepherds, as their ancestors, for many generations, had been before them. By these means, he told them, he might secure the land of Goshen for their residence, which was not only one of the most pleasant parts of Egypt, but the best calculated for feeding their flocks and herds. Besides this, he said, there would be another material advantage, namely, that it would be a happy retreat from the insults of the Egyptians, who were known to have an utter detestation to those who followed a shepherd's life.

Having given this caution, Joseph took with him five of his brothers, and after previously informing Pharaoh that his father and family were arrived at Goshen, presented them before the king. Pharaoh received them with great courtesy, out of respect to Joseph, and, among other questions, asked them of what occupation they were. They answered (agreeable to the directions given them by Joseph) that they were shepherds, as their ancestors, for many generations before, had been: that want of pasturage for their

† Joseph was no stranger to the tempers of his brethren, and, therefore, thought proper to reprove them in this gentle manner. Probably he suspected they might accuse each other with the cruelty they had exercised towards him, or throw envious reflections on Benjamin, because he had been eminently distinguished above the rest.

‡ It must certainly have given great consolation to good

old Jacob to find, from the promise of God, that Joseph was to attend him on his death-bed, and to close those eyes that had often assisted him in contemplating the beauties of nature. The custom of *closing the eyes* of persons departed is very ancient; and they were usually the nearest and dearest friends who performed this last office.

their cattle, and sustenance for themselves, had made them leave Canaan, and they humbly beseeched his majesty that they might be permitted to settle in the land of Goshen, that part of the country being best adapted for the purposes of their employment. Pharaoh readily granted their request, and moreover told Joseph, that if any of his brethren were remarkable for their activity and knowledge, he might, if he thought proper, appoint them as superintendants over the royal shepherds.

Joseph's project having so far happily succeeded, he, soon after, introduced his aged parent to Pharaoh, who, after receiving him in a very courteous manner, among other questions, asked him his age. Jacob answered, he was an hundred and thirty; upon which the king expressing some surprize from his appearing so strong and healthy, Jacob farther told him, that his life was not, as yet, near so long as some of his ancestors, nor did he look so well as those who were much farther advanced in life, which was owing to the great troubles and perplexities under which he had long laboured. Some other questions being asked, and the answers given, Jacob, after wishing the king health and prosperity, took his leave, and returned to Goshen (called here by Moses Rameses §) where Joseph took care to supply him and his family with such an abundance of necessaries as made them insensible of the general calamity.

While Jacob and his family were thus happily circumstanced, by means of the power and affection of Joseph, the Egyptians were in the utmost distress. The dreadful effects of the famine appeared more and more every day, and Joseph keeping up the corn at a very high price, in a short time all the money was brought into the king's coffers. When their money was gone, they were all (except the priests who were furnished from the king's stores) obliged to part with their cattle, their houses, their lands, and, at length, even their liberty, for provision ||.

All these Joseph purchased of the people in the king's name, and for the king's use; and, to let them see that the purchase was in earnest, and that their liberties and properties were now become the king's, he removed them, from their former places of abode, into different, and very distant parts of the kingdom.

In any other person such conduct might have been considered as arising from an immoderate zeal for absolute power in the king, and an advantage unjustly taken of the necessities of the

people; but so Joseph managed the matter as to gain the approbation both of prince and people. When the seventh and last year of the famine was come, he told them, they might expect to have a crop the ensuing year; for that the Nile would overflow its banks, and the earth bring forth her fruits as usual. Having made this known, he distributed fresh lands, cattle and corn to the people, that they might return to their tillage as before; but this he did on the following condition, that, from thenceforth, the fifth part of all the produce of their lands should become the property of the king. *Behold, said he, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh. Lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass in the increase that you shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your household, and for food for your little ones*.*

To these conditions the people willingly consented, imputing the preservation of their lives to Joseph's care: *Thou hast saved, said they, our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.* From this time it passed into a law, that the fifth part of the produce of the land, of Egypt (except what belonged to the priests) should become the property of the crown.

Whilst Joseph was enjoying the fruits of his great success and policy, his family at Goshen (whom he failed not frequently to visit) became not only numerous, but exceeding wealthy. The seven years of famine were succeeded by great plenty, the earth resuming its former fertility; and the whole land abounding in all the usual productions of nature. Seventeen of these years of plenty did Jacob live to see, at the expiration of which nature's lamp grew dim, and life was near exhausted: his decayed spirits warn him of his approaching fate, and each drooping faculty beats an alarm to death.

When Jacob found himself thus circumstanced, he sent for his son Joseph, whom he addressed in words to the following effect: "Though the desire of seeing a son so dear to me as you are, raised to the height of Egyptian glory, joined to the raging famine which then visited our land, made me willingly come down into this strange country; yet Canaan being the inheritance which God promised to Abraham and his posterity, and where he lies interred with my father Isaac, and some other of our family in the ground which he purchased of the inhabitants

§ It is the opinion of Mr. Locke, that Rameses was the name of the king, and that the part assigned to the family of Jacob was in the land of Goshen, and belonged to the royal territories. There was certainly a king of this name amongst the kings of Egypt. Others suppose, that this was the name of a province in the land of Goshen, assigned to Joseph's family, and that the city mentioned Exod. i. 11. was denominated from the province: Mr. Locke's opinion, however, which indeed is Sir John Marsham's, seems most probable; for it appears from the sequel of the chapter, (Gen. xlvii.) that, at this time, king, priests and people had their lands independent of each other; so that it is reasonable to think that this land, where the Israelites were settled, was a part of the king's demains.

|| Whatever those may think who have endeavoured to depreciate the conduct of Joseph, it is certain (as Dr.

Chandler observes) that there was no injustice in Joseph's making the Egyptians pay for the corn which he had bought with Pharaoh's money, and laid up with great care and expence. In demanding their cattle, he had, most probably, a view to save them; for, as they had not corn for themselves, they could much less have it for their cattle; and, therefore, this was the only way to preserve the lives of both; and to prevent that waste of the corn, which must have been made, if they had had the keeping and feeding of the cattle themselves; and it is highly probable, that he returned them their cattle after the famine, when they were fixed again in their several habitations, otherwise it would have been hardly possible for them to support their families, and carry on their business.

* This last part of Joseph's conduct, in a public capacity, fully evinces the great wisdom and humanity of which he was

tants for that purpose; my last and dying request to you is, that you will not suffer me to be buried here, but swear to see me carried to Machpelah, and there deposited with my ancestors. Your great power with the king will easily obtain that favour, which is the last I have to ask."

Joseph not only promised, but likewise swore, strictly to fulfil his father's request; upon which the good old man was so perfectly satisfied, that after thanking his son for these fresh assurances of his fidelity, he bowed himself in acknowledgment to God, who, besides all his other mercies, had given him this last token of his protection, in assuring him, by Joseph's promise and oath, that he should be removed from Egypt into the promised land.

Joseph having thus satisfied his father in this particular, took his leave, but not without giving a strict charge to those who attended him, that, upon the very first appearance of danger, they should immediately send for him. He had been but a short time at court, before a messenger arrived with the dismal intelligence that his father was near expiring; upon which, taking with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, he hastened, with all expedition, to visit him.

As soon as the feeble patriarch understood that his son Joseph was arrived, it immediately raised his sinking spirits, and he became so far revived as to be able to set upright in his bed. Desiring his favourite Joseph to approach near him, he began with recapitulating all the glorious promises which God had formerly made him concerning his posterity possessing the land of Canaan, and after mentioning the death of Rachel, together with the place where her remains were deposited †, he spoke to the following effect: "How tenderly I loved my dear Rachel all my

family can testify; but this farther proof I now give you of my affection to her. You have two sons born in a foreign country, and who, according to the usual order of inheritance, should have only the portion of grand children in the division of the promised land; but, from this day forward, they shall be esteemed my sons, and, as heads of two distinct tribes (for they shall not be called the tribe of Joseph, but the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh) receive a double portion in that allotment. But it must not be so with the other sons which you may beget after these: they must come in only for the portion of grand-children. And to you, in particular, I bequeath that track of land, which, by the force of arms, I took from the Amorites ‡."

During the time Jacob was thus talking with Joseph concerning himself and children, he had not observed that Joseph's sons were with him, but spoke of them as if they had been absent. At length, turning to Joseph, and observing (as he thought) somebody with him, (though he could not discern who it was on account of his eyes being dim with age,) he asked; who he had with him? to which Joseph replied, his sons Ephraim and Manasseh, and at the same time, with great reverence, bowed himself to the ground §.

Jacob was greatly rejoiced at this intelligence, and immediately ordered them to be brought near that he might bestow on them his blessing. Joseph obeyed his father's commands, and placed the children according to the order of their age, that is, Manasseh, as being the first-born on the right, and Ephraim on the left: but Jacob, crossing his hands, laid his *right* (which carried with it the preference) upon the *younger*, and his *left* upon the *elder* of them. Joseph observing this, and supposing it to proceed from a mistake, was

was possessed. As a prudent minister of state, but at the same time generous, tender and compassionate, he acquired for his king all which his subjects possessed; yet, instead of rigorously insisting upon the bargain they had made, he returns them their estates, and only lays a tax upon them for the better support of his prince's crown and government, at the rate of four shillings in the pound, or a fifth part; which he found by trial, from what was taken up in the seven years of plenty, Egypt could well spare; a favour, which we see the people acknowledge with the utmost gratitude, confessing, that he had been the very saviour of their lives. *Thou hast saved our lives; let us find grace in the sight of my lord; we thankfully accept the generous grant, and we will be Pharaoh's servants*, i. e. hold our lands of him, and pay him the fifth part of the produce: which words of the people evidently prove their high satisfaction with Joseph, and sufficiently exculpate him from any of that blame, wherewith modern infidelity hath laboured to blacken his reputation.

† It is probable that Jacob here mentioned to Joseph the place of Rachel's interment, in hopes that he might, at some convenient opportunity, remove her ashes to the cave of Machpelah.

‡ There are many particulars in the lives of the patriarchs, and of others, which are not at all mentioned in scripture; and there are some instances of a transient reference to facts of this kind, to things which have been said and done, but are never related. Of this kind, it is reasonable to suppose, is the passage in question; at least we have no mention in scripture of any portion of land taken from the Amorites by Jacob. All, therefore, which can be said upon the subject must be mere conjecture; of which the most probable is, that the parcel of ground near Shechem, which Jacob purchased of Hamor, is here meant; and which, probably, he took, or recovered, by force of arms, from the Amorites, who, it seems, had seized on it after his removal to another part of Canaan.

§ Joseph's piety to his father is justly placed among the brightest ornaments of his character. This distinguished instance of his humility is particularly taken notice of by a very celebrated Divine, whose remarks on it are as follow: "Highly exalted, (says he) as he was in the court of the greatest monarch upon earth, he thought it no lessening to bend before his aged father, and pay him all the marks of submission and duty; nay, and this at a time when the text assureth us, *Jacob's eyes were dim, and could not see*; and, consequently, when he could not be upbraided by his father for want of due respect, and, probably, would not have been blamed by any other mortal: for who would have been so vain, to censure the conduct of one, who was, at that moment, in the highest reputation for wisdom and prudence of all mortals then alive? or, if their vanity could have carried them to censure his conduct, their fear of Pharaoh's first minister would certainly have obliged them to keep their thoughts to themselves: yet, under all these circumstances of his father's blindness, his own exalted station, unrivalled wisdom, and uncontrolled power, Joseph's affection and dutiful heart would not suffer him to dispense with the least form of respect and veneration to his agent parent. For, we read, that, when he brought his sons to present them to his father, *he bowed himself with his face to the earth*. And, surely, there is not any one circumstance of his grandeur, that reflects half so much lustre upon his character, as this single instance of filial humiliation. When I consider him upon his knees to GOD, I regard him as a poor mortal in the discharge of his duty to his creator, of adorable majesty and infinite height above himself! when I behold him bowing down to Pharaoh, I consider him in the dutiful posture of a subject to his prince, to whom he was indebted for the highest exaltation and honour. But when I see him bending to the earth, before a poor, old, blind, decrepid father, I behold him with admiration and delight. How doth that humiliation exalt him!"

was going to rectify it; but his father told him, that what he did was by Divine direction, and therefore made Ephraim not only the first in nomination, but gave him a blessing much more extensive than that conferred on his elder brother.

The conversation was hitherto private, being only between Jacob and his favourite son Joseph. But the good old patriarch, finding his dissolution near at hand, ordered all his sons to be brought before him, that, while he had strength to speak, he might take his last farewell, and not only distribute his blessings among them, but likewise foretell what should happen to them and their posterity, in future times.

Accordingly all Jacob's sons being brought before him, he addressed them separately, beginning with Reuben the eldest:

Reuben, says he, thou art my first-born, and by right of primogeniture, entitled to many privileges and prerogatives in superiority over thy brethren; but, for the crime of incest, in polluting thy father's bed, both thou and thy tribe

are totally degraded from the privileges of birth-right.

Having said this to Reuben, he next addressed himself to *Simeon* and *Levi* conjunctively; telling them, that for their impious massacre of Hamor and his people, their tribes should be ever separate, and dispersed among the rest. *I will divide them*, says he, *in Jacob*, and scatter them in *Israel* ||.

Jacob, then turning to *Judah*, prophesied of him to this effect: That to his tribe should the sovereignty belong, and they should be situated in a very fruitful country: that from his name should the whole nation of the Jews derive their appellation; and that the form of government which he then instituted should remain among them until the coming of the Messiah*.

Of *Zebulun*, Jacob prophesied that his tribe should be planted near the sea coasts, and have harbours convenient for shipping†; and of *Issachar*, that his should prove a pusillanimous people,

|| This prophecy was literally fulfilled; for the Levites were scattered throughout all the other tribes; and Simeon had only a part of the land of Judah for his residence.

* The words in the text run thus: *Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.* Many commentators have written largely on this remarkable prophecy related by Jacob to his son Judah; but the most sensible and explicit observations on it, as well as the most clear display of its being fulfilled, are given by that ingenious and learned divine Dr. Henry Southwell, whom we shall here quote in his own words:

“From the time (says he) that our first parents eat of the forbidden fruit, we have seen that the promised seed was, one age after another, more and more circumscribed, although its salutary effects were to be the same. It is first called the seed of the woman; it is next consigned over to Seth; Shem, the youngest son of Noah, gets the preference; afterwards Abraham is made choice of; from Isaac, the son of Abraham, it goes to his second son Jacob; and here Jacob, by the spirit of prophecy, conveys it to the posterity of Judah.

“There are several things to be attended to in this remarkable prophecy, and such as are of the utmost importance for us to know. First, we are told that Judah's brethren should praise him, and that his hand should be in the neck of his enemies. This was remarkably fulfilled in the local situation of the tribe of Judah; for their being so near the Arabians, obliged them to be continually on their guard; and as they were for the most part successful, so it may be justly said that the hand of Judah was in the neck of his enemies, and that his brethren praised him for standing up in their defence. Secondly, it is here said, that his father's children should bow down before him, and certainly nothing was ever more literally fulfilled. David, in whose family the royal sovereignty was placed, was of the tribe of Judah, and to him all the other tribes bowed down. But the prophecy conveys a further idea, namely, that from Judah, according to the flesh, the Messiah should come, to whom all nations should bow down; and in the book of Revelations he is called the lion of the tribe of Judah. Thirdly, *the sceptre shall not depart from Judah*, &c. by which we are to understand, that there should never be one wanting to sway the regal sceptre, or exercise sovereign authority in the tribe of Judah, till that glorious and Divine person came, whose kingdom was to have no end, and to whom the people were to be gathered; for the Messiah is, in many places of scripture, called the *desire of all nations*. Such is the nature of this remarkable prophecy; and now, in order to prove the concurring authenticity of the Mosaic and Gospel History, let us see in what manner it has been fulfilled.

“During the time of Joshua's wars with the Canaanites, the tribe of Judah was more distinguished for its valour than the others; and it appears, from the book of Judges, that they were always the most forward to engage with the common enemy. When it is said that *the sceptre shall not depart from Judah*, it implies, that it should depart from all those of the other tribes who should enjoy it. Thus it departed from

the tribe of Benjamin on the death of Saul; and it is well known, that the ten tribes were carried away captive, and incorporated with other nations, while that of Benjamin put itself under the protection of Judah.

“From the time of David till the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, Judah exercised the regal authority; and although ten of the tribes, who followed the idolatry of Jeroboam, had kings, yet they were, for the most part, subject to those of Judah. It is true, the Jews were also carried captive to Babylon, but during the seventy years they were in that country, they were so far from being treated as slaves, that they were allowed to build houses, and lived in such affluence, that many of them refused to return to their own country when permission was granted them. When Cyrus the emperor issued his orders for them to return to the land of Judea, they had rulers among them; for they were expressly mentioned in the royal proclamation. It is certain, that after returning from their captivity, they were not so free as before; because they were frequently oppressed by the Persians, Greeks and Romans; but for all that, they lived as a distinct people, under their own laws and government. It continued to be the same under the Asmodean princes; and it is well known that Herod the Great married Mariamne, the last female of that line; and in the latter end of his reign the Messiah was born. It is true, the Romans, in some cases, deprived them of the power of judging in cases of treason; but, notwithstanding, we find, in the cases of Our Saviour, and the apostle Paul, that the Roman prætors or governors, never proceeded to judge a criminal till he was condemned by the rulers of the people.”

The learned Dr. Shaw says, the blessings given to Judah were very different from all those bestowed on the other tribes. The mountains in Judea abound with so much wine, oil, and milk, that one is surprized at the fertility of a place which, at a distance, has the appearance of barrenness. Grapes and raisins are sent annually in great quantities from Hebron to Egypt, besides several other sorts of fruit.

From these observations, will not the impartial reader declare, that this prophecy has been literally fulfilled? and is not the present melancholy state of the Jews a striking proof of its authenticity? Till the Messiah came, they had a regal government; but, because they rejected him, they are now scattered up and down through all nations, without being permitted to enjoy the privileges of any nation whatever. Surely this should convince us, that no human testimony can overthrow the evidence brought in support of the Mosaic and Gospel Histories.

† It is remarkable that Zebulun is mentioned by Jacob before Issachar, who was the eldest; but this distinction, it is probable, arose from his great superiority and merit. Zebulun's portion of the country was likewise very preferable to Issachar's; for, besides the advantage he had in common with him, and that our Lord chiefly resided in his tribe, and was thence called a Galilean, he is here promised a sea-coast, with harbours commodious for ships. If Jacob had been present at the division of the promised land, he could hardly have given a more exact description of Zebulun's lot; for it extended from the Mediterranean Sea on the west, to the lake of Tiberias, or Sea of Galilee, on the east.

ple, and be lovers of inglorious ease, more than of liberty and renown †.

Jacob having predicted the fate of, and bestowed his blessings on, the children descended from Leah, proceeds next to those of his two concubinary wives. He began with *Dan*, the son of Bilhah, whose posterity, he foretold, (though descended from an hand-maid) should have the same privileges with the other tribes, become a politic people, and greatly versed in the stratagems of war §. Of *Gad's* posterity, he foretold, that they should be frequently infested with robbers, but should overcome at last ||. Of *Asser's*, that they should be situated in a pleasant and fruitful country *: And of *Naphtali's*, that they should spread their branches like an oak, and multiply exceedingly †.

Jacob, having now done with those children begotten on Leah, and his concubinary wives, next directs his attention to the sons of his beloved Rachel. Turning himself to Joseph, he first took some notice of his past troubles, and then set forth the future greatness of his descendants: after which he bestowed his benediction on him in words to the following effect: "The Lord, says he, even the God of thy Fathers, shall bless thee with the dew of heaven, and with the fatness of the earth, with the fruit of the womb, that is, with a numerous posterity, and with plenty of all sorts of cattle. May all the blessings promised to me and my fore-fathers be doubled upon Joseph's head; may they out-top and outstretch the highest mountains; and prove to him more fruitful, and more lasting, than they †."

The only one now remaining to receive Jacob's blessing was his youngest son Benjamin, who, no doubt, from having been a great favou-

rite with his father, expected a suitable distinction from the rest of his brethren; but, whether Jacob foresaw that no extraordinary merit or happiness would attend this tribe, or that it should afterwards be blended with that of Judah and consequently share the blessing of that tribe, so it was that he only prophesied of him, that his descendants should be of a fierce and warlike disposition; and, *like a ravenous wolf, should shed the blood of their enemies, and in the evening divide the spoil* §.

The good old patriarch having thus (by Divine direction) foretold the fate of his descendants, he bestowed his blessing on each of his sons separately; after which he reminded them all (but more especially Joseph) that it was his most earnest request they would bury him among his ancestors, in the cave of Machpelah, which had been purchased by Abraham, and where not only the remains of him and his wife Sarah were deposited, but likewise those of Isaac and Rebecca, and were he had also buried his wife Leah.

Having given this last charge, the pious Jacob laid himself gently down in his bed, a short time after which he calmly resigned his soul into the hands of him who gave it. He died in the 147th year of his age, during the last seventeen of which he resided in Egypt.

The loss of so good a father must, undoubtedly, be very afflicting to the whole family, but none of them expressed their grief with such filial affection as the pious Joseph, who could not behold his aged parent's face, though dead, without kissing and bathing it with his tears. Having thus given vent to his passions, and somewhat recovered himself, he ordered the physicians (according

† Of all the tribes of Israel, that of Issachar was distinguished for being the most indolent. That part of the country which fell to their share was exceeding fertile; but that fertility only served to enervate the people, so that when they were invaded by foreign enemies, they soon became an easy prey to them, and were often obliged to pay tribute.

§ The words in the text are, *Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path; that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.* It is to be observed that the part of Canaan which the descendants of Dan inhabited, was noted for serpents of a particular species, who were so cunning that they used to lie in wait to bite the feet of passengers. This very justly alluded to the disposition of Dan's descendants, who, when engaged in war, frequently did more execution by craft and stratagem, than by force of arms. It is the opinion of the Jews that the prophecy of Dan's destroying his enemies by cunning was more particularly fulfilled, when Sampson, who was of that tribe, pulled down the temple, which crushed himself and the Philistines to death. See Judges xvi. 30.

|| The tribe of *Gad* had their portion of land on the frontiers of the Jewish territories, so that they were continually exposed to the incursions of the bordering Arabs; but, in the course of time, they became so expert in war, that they always repulsed them.

* The tribe of *Asser* possessed that part of the country, which reached from Zidon to Mount Carmel: It was so beautiful and fertile a spot, that it not only abounded with all kinds of provisions, but also with the choicest fruits, and most luxuriant productions of the earth.

† In the territories allotted to the tribe of *Naphtali* was the country of Genesarat; which (Josephus says) was looked upon as the utmost effort of nature in point of beauty. It was also remarkable for producing some of the best wines in all Palestine. In one part of the prophecy, as related by

Moses, it is said, *Naphtali is a hind let loose*; the meaning of which is, that the people should be exceeding swift in the pursuit of their enemies, which, indeed, was the case, in a very peculiar manner, with this tribe.

† The fruitfulness promised to Joseph in the great increase of his posterity was exemplified in the prodigious number of his two-fold tribe, Ephraim and Manasseh. At the first numbering of the tribes, these produced 72,700 men capable of bearing arms (See Numb. i. 33, 35.) And at the second numbering, 85,200, (Numb. xxvi. 34, 37.) which by far exceeded the number of either of the other tribes.

§ History sufficiently justifies the truth of this prediction relative to the tribe of Benjamin, for they alone maintained a war with all the other tribes, and overcame them in two battles, though they had sixteen to one. It must, however, be observed, that the comparison does not only respect mere valour and fortitude in defending themselves, but also fierceness in making wars and depredations upon others. But what is chiefly to be regarded in this prophecy is, that the tribe of Benjamin should continue till the final destruction of the Jewish polity. For since the natural morning and evening cannot with the least propriety be here understood, and as the Jewish state is the subject of all Jacob's prophecy, we must consider the morning and night as the beginning and final period of that state; and, consequently, that the tribe of Benjamin would exist till Shiloh came. And this prophecy was fully accomplished; for, upon the division of the kingdom after Solomon's death, the tribe of Benjamin adhered to that of Judah, and formed one people with it; continued to share the same fortune, and by that means existed till the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, which happened many years after the other ten tribes were no longer a people.

(according to the custom of the country) to embalm^{||} his father's body, and then set about making the necessary preparations for his funeral.

The time that Jacob's family mourned for their father was seventy days, during which, Joseph never appeared at court, it being improper for him so to do on such an occasion. In consequence of this he requested some of the officers about the king to acquaint him, that his father, previous to his death, had enjoined him, upon oath, to bury him in a sepulchre belonging to their family, in the land of Canaan; and that therefore he begged permission that he might go and fulfil his last commands; after which he would return to court with all convenient expedition.

Pharaoh not only complied with Joseph's request, but (in compliment to him and his family) gave orders that the chief officers of his household, together with some of the principal nobility of the kingdom, should attend the funeral, who, joined with his own, and his father's whole family, some in chariots, and others on horseback, formed one of the most pompous processions ever seen on a similar occasion.

On their arrival in the land of Canaan they halted at a place called *the threshing-floor of Atad**, where they continued seven days mourning for the deceased. The Canaanites, who inhabited that part of the country, observing the Egyptians mixing themselves in these obsequies, were astonished, and imagining them to be the principals concerned in the funeral lamentation, could not forbear exclaiming, *this is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians*; from whence they called the name of the place Abel-Mizraim, which signifies *the mourning of the Egyptians*.

This solemnity being ended, they proceeded on their journey, and at length arriving at the field of Machpelah, they deposited the remains of Jacob in the cave with his ancestors, after which the whole company returned, in solemn procession, to Egypt.

During the life of Jacob, Joseph's brethren thought themselves secure; but now their aged father was no more, their former fears returned, and suggested to them, the just revenge Joseph might yet take for the great injuries he had received from their hands. In consequence of this they held a consultation together in what manner to proceed for their own security; the result of which was to form a message, (supposing to have

been delivered by Jacob,) and send it to their brother. This was accordingly done, and the substance of the message was to the following effect: "Thy father commanded, before he died, saying, Thus shall ye say to Joseph: Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren and their sin; for they did evil unto thee; but pardon them, not only for my sake, but because they are the servants of the God of thy Father."

When Joseph read this message, such was his compassionate and forgiving temper, that he could not refrain from weeping. To remove therefore the fears and apprehensions of his brethren, he immediately sent for them, and, receiving them with the same kind affection as when their father was alive, excused the actions they had formerly committed to his prejudice in the most obliging manner; and, in order fully to remove their ill-founded fears, dismissed them with the assurance that they should always find in him a constant friend and an affectionate brother.

Though Joseph lived fifty-four years after his father's death, yet the sacred historian does not mention any farther particulars of him, except the following; namely, that he lived to see himself the happy parent of a numerous offspring in his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, even to the third generation; during which time, it is reasonable to suppose, he continued in high favour with his prince, and in a considerable employment under him.

When Joseph grew old, and found his death approaching, he sent for his brethren, and, with the like prophetic spirit that his father Jacob had done, told them, that God, according to his promise, would not fail bringing their posterity out of Egypt into the land of Canaan. At the same time he made them swear, that when it should please God thus to visit them, they should not forget to carry his remains with them, that they might be deposited in the burial-place of his ancestors.

The pious Joseph having thus bound his brethren by oath, to convey his remains to his native land, soon after departed this life, in the 110th year of his age. In compliance with the injunction laid, his brethren had the body immediately embalmed, put into a coffin, and carefully secured, till the time should come when the prediction was to be fulfilled of their leaving Egypt, and possessing the land of Canaan.

Thus

^{||} The invention of embalming, which was first practised by the Egyptians, is said to have originated from the overflowing of the Nile; for, during the time the country was laid under water, which was for two months, they had no access to the respective places, where they deposited their dead. Dr. Warburton (the late learned bishop of Gloucester) observes, "that it was a wise institution in Egypt, to commit the care of embalming the dead to the physicians; as it gave them an opportunity of instructing themselves in the causes of diseases, and of improving their knowledge in anatomy."

It is well known that the Egyptians excelled all the people in the world in the art of embalming human bodies, many of which remain at this day, under the name of *mummies*. Embalming was practised upon rich and poor, though with more or less cost, according to the rank of the person. As to the manner how it was performed, the most costly way, according to Diodorus and Herodotus, was briefly this: the embalmers first drew out the brains through the nostrils with

a crooked instrument of iron, and filled the vacancy with different spices; then an incision was made on the left side of the belly, and all the intestines taken out, except the heart and kidneys: the entrails were cleansed and washed with wine of palms, and perfumed with aromatic odours. Then the belly was filled with pounded myrrh, cassia, and other odoriferous drugs; and the incision being sewed up, the body was carefully anointed with the oil of cedar, and other ointments, for above thirty days, or else laid in nitre for seventy days, which was the longest time allowed. They then washed the whole body, and bound fillets of fine linen round every part, covering it with gum. All this was done without disfiguring the body; so that the very hairs remained on the brows and eye-lids, and the resemblance of the countenance was preserved, so as to be easily known.

* This place is supposed to have been situated about two leagues from Jericho, on the other side the Jordan, and about fifty miles from Hebron.

Thus have we finished the life of the great patriarch Joseph, who is certainly one of the most distinguished characters to be met with either in Sacred or profane history. To enliven what has been already said of him, we shall conclude this chapter with some general reflections and observations on the whole of his conduct; and likewise point out some of the most distinguished writers, whose accounts of him justly corroborate with that given by the Sacred Historian.

It is observable, that Moses is more diffuse on the History of Joseph, than on that of any other of the patriarchs: indeed, the whole is a master-piece of history: there is not only in the manner throughout such an happy, though uncommon mixture of simplicity and grandeur, (which is a double character so hard to be united as is seldom met with in compositions merely human) but it is likewise related with the greatest variety of tender and affecting circumstances, which would afford matter for reflections useful for the conduct of almost every part and stage of the life of man.

Consider him in whatever point of view, or in whatever light you will, he must appear amiable and excellent, worthy of imitation, and claiming the highest applause. You see him spoken of in the sacred books with the highest honour; as a person greatly in the favour of God, and protected by him wherever he went, even in so extraordinary a manner, as to become the observation of others,—as one of the strictest fidelity in every trust committed to him,—of the most exemplary chastity and honour, that no solicitations could overcome†,—of the most fixed reverence for God, in the midst of all the corruptions of an idolatrous court and kingdom—of the noblest resolution and fortitude, that the strongest temptations could never subdue—of such admirable sagacity, wisdom and prudence, that made even a prince and his nobles consider him as under Divine inspiration—of that indefatigable industry and diligence; as made him successful in the most

arduous attempts—of the most generous compassion and forgiveness of spirit, that the most malicious and cruel injuries could never weaken or destroy—as the preserver of Egypt, and the neighbouring nations, and as the stay and support of his own father and family—as one patient and humble in adversity—moderate in the use of power and the height of prosperity—faithful as a servant, dutiful as a son, affectionate as a brother, and just and generous as a ruler over the people.—In a word, as one of the best and most finished characters, and as an instance of the most exemplary piety and strictest virtue.

Agreeable to this character, and the account given of him by Moses, Joseph is spoken of with the greatest honour and respect by several profane authors. Artaphanus, a very ancient Greek writer, represents him as a person who excelled his other brethren in wisdom and prudence; and that when he came into Egypt, and was presented to the king, he was made by him administrator of the whole kingdom; that whereas, before his time, public affairs were in the greatest disorder, because the country was not rightly divided, and the poorer sort of the people were oppressed by the higher. Joseph first of all divided the lands, distinguished them by proper marks and bounds, recovered a good part of them from the waters, and made them fit for cultivation and tillage; that he divided some of them by lot to the priests, and found out the art of measurement; and that he was greatly beloved by the Egyptians on these accounts.

Pbilo, an ancient poet, makes honourable mention of him, as the son of Jacob, as an interpreter of dreams, as lord of Egypt, and as conversant in the secrets of time, under the various fluctuations of fate.

Alexander Polyhistor, who made large extracts out of other authors, relating to the Jewish affairs, cites one *Demetrius*, as giving the character of the ancient Jewish patriarchs. He speaks honourably of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, the latter of whom, he says, was sold to the

† As the history of Joseph is so singularly entertaining and particularly interesting, it cannot be too much embellished. We shall, therefore, here insert the following lines, which not only display, with great elegance, that part of his character, which particularly respects his chastity, but also the most material circumstances that occurred during the progress of his life.

BLEST be the youth, if such there can be found,
Who in the midst of trials, stands his ground;
Who guards his heart with Virtue's solid arms,
When pleasures tempt him, or when beauty warms:
Who unconcern'd can each temptation fly,
And let the *Siren* pass neglected by.—
Such once was *Joseph*, when the wily dame,
By lust embolden'd, and by want of shame,
Seiz'd his chaste robe, her eye that dar'd fire,
Spoke the fierce impulse of inflam'd desire:
Loose flow'd her tresses, while her open vest,
Betray'd the panting beauties of her breast:
Her eager lip and glowing cheeks were spread
With unavailing warmth and conscious red;
Such an attractive sweetness crown'd the fair,
Such a soft, languishing, and dying air,
As well might move ev'n impotent old age,
And ev'ry heart but *Joseph's* heart engage.
He knew those wiles were practis'd to entice,
And underneath each feature lay a vice.

Yet for such goodness, sanctity, and truth,
How long misfortunes press'd the guiltless youth;

What ills he bore, how infinite their sum!
Unnumber'd pass! unnumber'd yet to come;
Not but he bore in each precarious scene,
Each change of fortune with a mind serene;
Calm and unmov'd in ev'ry change of life,
Calm 'midst the furies of domestic strife,
Calm midst th' enticements of his master's wife;
Calm in the pit, tho' hungry, cold, and bare;
Calm in the dungeon,—for his God was there:
That God, who for such trials to atone,
Reach'd out his pow'rful hand, and plac'd him near a throne.

Virtue rejoice! tho' heav'n may frown awhile,
That frown is but an earnest to a smile;
One day of tears prefaces years of joy,
And torments only mend us, not destroy.
Who feels the lashes of an adverse hour,
Finds them but means to waft him into pow'r.
As health to bodies bitter draughts impart,
So trials are but physic to the heart.

Hence ye blind tribe of *Epicurus's* sect,
No more the ways of Providence suspect;
Which mocks the search of undeserving fools;
Which, far beyond the quibbles of the schools,
Works by dark laws, tho' regular it's ends,
And most chastises whom it most befriends:
The Just and Good it favours soon or late,
And ev'ry *JOSEPH* meets a *JOSEPH'S* FATE.

the Egyptians at seventeen years of age; that he interpreted the king's dreams; that he was governor of all Egypt, with other circumstances, agreeable to the sacred history.

The particulars mentioned by Justin relative to Joseph are remarkably confirmative of the Scripture account, and deserve to be particularly attended to: "Joseph, says he, the youngest of his brethren had a superiority of genius which made them fear him, and sell him to foreign merchants, who carried him to Egypt, where he directed public matters with such success, as rendered him very dear to the king. He had a great sagacity in the explanation of prophecies and dreams; nor was there any thing so abstruse, either in divine or human knowledge, that he did not readily attain. He foretold a great dearth several years before it happened, and prevented a famine's falling upon Egypt, by advising the king to publish a decree, requiring the people to make provision for divers years. His knowledge, in short, was so great, that the Egyptians listened to the prophecies coming from his mouth, as if they had proceeded not from man, but from GOD himself."

The name of Joseph was particularly respected in all parts of the eastern world. The Arabian writers, from ancient tradition, give, in many respects, the same history of him as Moses doth; and, particularly, ascribe to him the useful invention of measuring the Nile; the cutting some of the principal canals, and other works of great use and advantage in Egypt. In a word, they attribute to him all the curious wells, cisterns, aqueducts, and public granaries, as well as some obelisks, pyramids, and other ancient monuments, which are all called by his name, and which are ascribed by the natives of Egypt themselves also to him, as well as all the ancient works of public utility throughout the kingdom; particularly, the rendering the province of Al-Tey-yum, from a standing pool, or marsh, the most fertile and best cultivated land in all Egypt. The Koran of Mahomet is very liberal in his commendation; we find there one whole chapter (the twelfth, intitled JOSEPH) concerning him; and the eastern tradition of him is, that he not only caused justice to be impartially administered, and encouraged the people to industry, and the improvement of agriculture, during the seven years of plenty; but began and perfected several works of very great utility.

The Author of Ecclesiasticus has given us an encomium on the patriarch Joseph in these words: "Neither, says he, was there a man born like unto Joseph: he was the governor of his brethren, and the stay of the people, whose bones were regarded of the Lord." Chap. xlix. 15.

To the character thus given of Joseph, we shall subjoin some farther particulars, which from the singularity of their nature, cannot fail engaging the most serious attention of the reader.

As there is no character (says the excellent and learned Mr. Rollin) in the Old Testament more worthy of imitation than that of Joseph, so are there few saints in whom God hath been pleased to express so many circumstances of resemblance with his BLESSED SON, as in Joseph; the bare repetition of which will be an evident proof of this observation:

JOSEPH.

He is hated of his brethren.

1. For accusing them of some great crime.

2. For being affectionately beloved by his father.

3. For foretelling his future glory.

He is sent by his father to his brethren at a distance.

His brethren conspire against his life.

He is sold for twenty pieces of silver.

He is given up into the hands of strangers by his own brethren.

His garment was dipped in blood.

He is condemned by Potiphar without any one's speaking in his behalf.

He suffers in silence.

Placed between two criminals, he foretels the advancement of the one, and the approaching death of the other.

He lies three years in prison.

He arrives at glory by sufferings and humiliations.

He is set over the house of Pharaoh, and over all Egypt.

Pharaoh alone is above him.

He was called the Saviour of the world.

All bend the knee before him.

The famine is in all lands, there is no bread but in Egypt, where Joseph governs.

All are sent back to Joseph by Pharaoh.

All the neighbouring people come into Egypt to buy corn.

Joseph's brethren come to him, own him, fall down before him, and are fixed in Egypt.

JESUS CHRIST.

He is hated by the Jews.

1. For reproving them for their sins.

2. For declaring himself to be the Son of God, and saying, that God himself called him his well-beloved Son.

3. For foretelling that they should see him sitting at the right hand of God.

He is sent by God his Father to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

The Jews form a design of putting him to death.

He is sold for thirty pieces of silver.

He is delivered up to the Romans by the Jews.

The humanity he was clothed with suffers a bloody death.

He is condemned, and nobody speaks in his defence.

He suffers all kinds of injuries and punishments, without complaining.

Placed between two thieves, he foretels the one he should go into paradise, while the other dies impenitent.

He was three days in the grave.

It behoved that Christ should suffer, and thus enter into his glory.

He is made head of the church, and every creature is made subject unto him.

He is above every creature, but subject to God, as man.

His name of Jesus signifies a Saviour, and is indeed the only one by whom we can be saved.

Every creature must bow at the name of Jesus Christ.

Poverty and error are universal, truth and grace are only found in the church where Jesus Christ reigns.

There is no salvation, no grace, but by Jesus Christ.

All nations are admitted into the Church to obtain salvation.

The Jews will one day return to Jesus Christ, own him, worship him, and enter into the church.

Upon the whole, the history of Joseph may be considered as an exact picture in miniature of the conduct of Providence:—that Providence, "which as Lord Bacon observes, in all its works, is full of windings and turnings; so that one thing seems to be a doing, when, in the mean time, quite another thing is really intended. *De sapientia veterum.*" Thus the lowest stage of misfortune, to which Joseph, by the mysterious conduct of Providence, was reduced, proved the immediate step by which he rose to honour. And those who would see the same method of Providence exemplified in a reverse of fortune, may consult the instructive history of Haman, beautifully

tifully contrasted with that of Mordecai, in the book of Esther: a consideration this, which should check our forwardness in censuring the ways of God, because they often appear to us crooked and irregular; for this is no more than what must happen, while the ends of all things are placed at a distance far beyond our reach: a consideration, which should teach us, that what-

ever vicissitudes of fortune befall us in this life, it is our truest wisdom, as well as our highest duty, cheerfully to acquiesce, and readily to submit ourselves: assured that the hand of God is in all, and that His wisdom, by ways and means unknown to us, will, unquestionably, cause every thing to work together for the good of those, who truly and unfeignedly love and serve him.

C H A P. VIII.

A revolution happens in Egypt, in consequence of which the Israelites are greatly oppressed. The king commands their male children to be destroyed, but his orders are not observed. Birth and education of Moses. He avenges the cause of his brethren. Leaves Egypt, and retires to Midian, where he becomes shepherd to Jethro, the principal man of the country, and in whose family he marries. God appears to Moses, and encourages him to undertake the deliverance of the Israelites. He arrives (accompanied by his brother Aaron) at the court of Pharaoh, who, treats them with great disrespect, and instead of alleviating, increases the oppression of the Israelites. Moses repeatedly solicits Pharaoh that he would release them from bondage, but this he as repeatedly refuses, notwithstanding the great miracles wrought by him and his brother Aaron. Institution of the Passover. Departure of the Israelites from Egypt. The Almighty directs them in their way by a very singular token. They are pursued by Pharaoh, who, together with his host, are drowned in the Red Sea. The Israelites praise God for their happy deliverance.

THE distinguished happiness which the descendants of Jacob had possessed during the power invested in their great protector Joseph, was, after his death, materially interrupted by the accession of a new king to the throne of Egypt. This monarch beheld, with a jealous eye, not only the prosperity, but also the great increase, of the Israelites, and began to fear that, in case of an invasion, they might possibly take part with the enemy, and thereby divest him of his regal dignity.

In consequence of these conjectures Pharaoh summoned a council of his principal nobility, to whom he stated the absolute necessity of taking some measures to lessen not only the power, but also great increase of the Israelites, who were to be considered as strangers in the land where they now dwelt, and, in time, might be prejudicial to the public weal.

The council agreed in opinion with the king; upon which it was resolved not only to impose heavy taxes on them, but to confine them likewise to the hard labour of bearing burthens, digging clay, making bricks, and building strong fortresses in different parts of the kingdom; by means of which their spirits would be sunk, their bodies impoverished, and the great increase that had for some time taken place among them, in a great measure stopped.

No sooner was this resolution formed than it was carried into execution. The wretched Israelites were set about the laborious employ to

which they were assigned, and that they might not be negligent in the execution of their business, task-masters were set over them, whose natural dispositions were so cruel, that they did all in their power to make their lives truly miserable.

But such was the goodness of God, in behalf of the poor Israelites, that Pharaoh's project was far from succeeding to his wishes; for the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied. This so aggravated the king, and increased his jealousy to such a degree, that, in order to obtain his purposes, he hit upon another expedient. He sent for two of the most eminent of the Egyptian midwives, (whose names were Shiprah and Puah) to whom he gave a strict charge, that, whenever they were called to do their office to any Hebrew woman, if the child was a male they should privately strangle it, but if a female, they might let it live*.

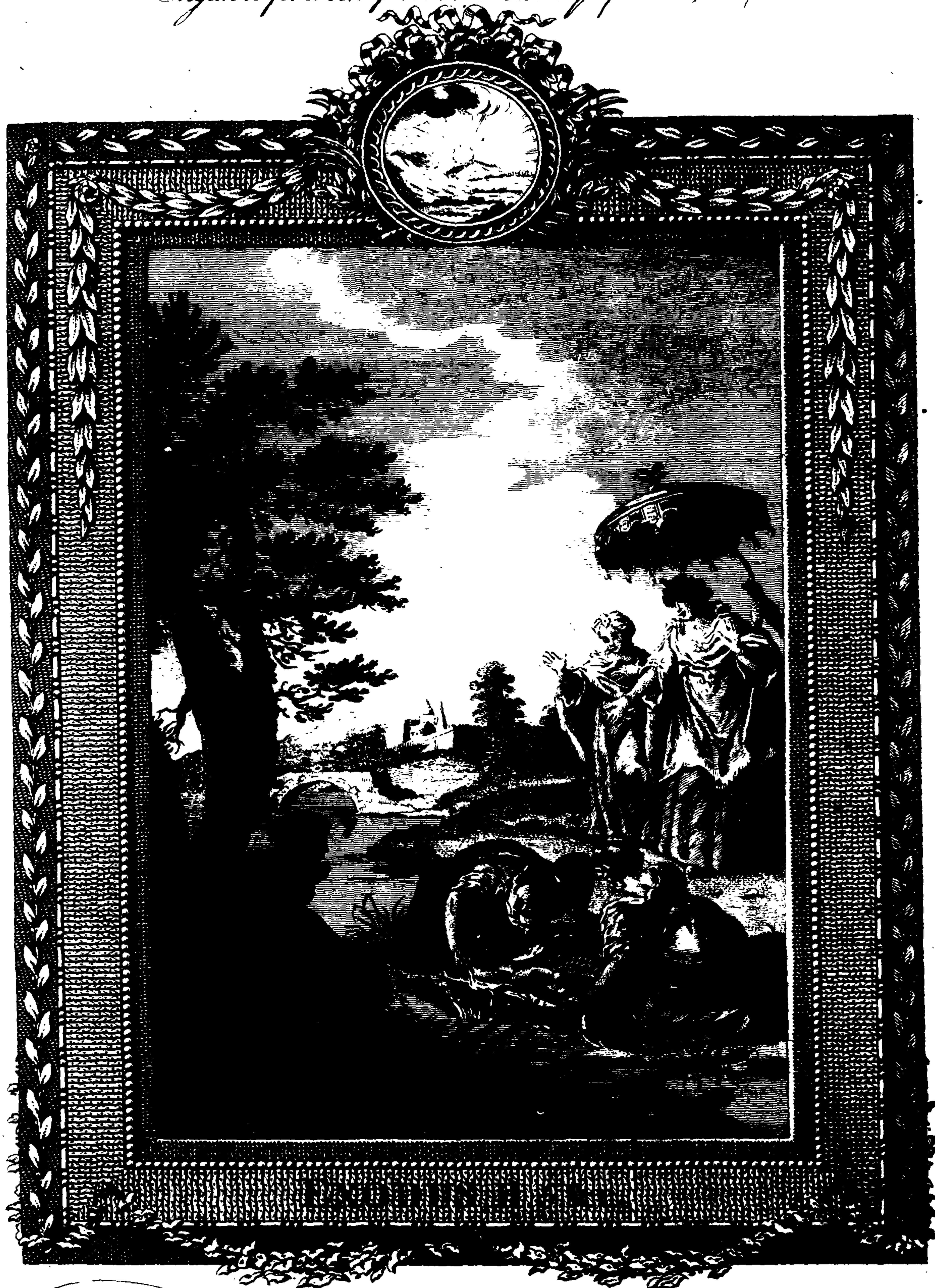
The midwives touched with the cruelty of this injunction, and fully satisfied in their minds that it was better to obey God than man, paid no regard to Pharaoh's orders, but saved both male and female alike. Irritated at their disobedience, the king sent for them, and reprimanded them for their conduct in very severe terms; but they excused themselves by telling him, that the Hebrew women were so much stronger in their constitutions than the Egyptians, and so lively, that they were generally delivered before they could reach them.

The

* This was certainly a very cruel and inhuman order in itself, but it was greatly increased by making the midwives the executioners; thus obliging them not only to be savagely bloody, but basely perfidious in the most tender trust. Josephus tells us, there was a certain scribe (as they called him) a man of great credit for his predictions, who told the king, there would be a Hebrew child born about that time,

who would be a scourge to the Egyptians, and advance the glory of his own nation; and, if he lived to grow up, would be a man eminent for virtue and courage, and make his name famous to posterity; and that, by the counsel and instigation of this scribe it was, that Pharaoh gave the midwives orders to put all the Hebrew male children to death.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



MOSES *discovered in the Ark of* **BULRUSHES**
by the Daughter of Pharaoh.

The judicious as well as humane conduct of the Egyptian midwives was very acceptable to God; but Pharaoh was highly incensed against them, considering the excuse they made as a mere evasion. He therefore determined not to trust them any longer, but to try another expedient, which might more effectively answer the intended purposes, and totally extirpate the whole male race of the Hebrews. To accomplish this end, he issued out an edict †, commanding that every male born among the Israelites should be thrown into the river and drowned, but that all the females should be saved.

It is not to be wondered at that so barbarous an edict should greatly afflict the already distressed Israelites, and that they should concert various methods whereby they might secure their offspring from the consequences of so inhuman a decree. That methods of this nature were used will appear from the following circumstances.

Some years before this cruel edict was published, one Amram, of the house of Levi, married a woman named Jochebed, of the same tribe. The first child they had was a daughter, whom they called Miriam, and about four years after she was delivered of a son, whom they named Aaron. In the time of this cruel persecution Jochebed was delivered of another son, who being a child of most exquisite beauty, she was particularly anxious for the preservation of its life.

In hopes of accomplishing her wishes she concealed the child in her house for three months ‡; but, not being able to secret him any longer, and fearful that he would fall into the hands of those appointed to drown the male children, she at length resolved to commit him to the Providence of God. Accordingly, having made a little ark or boat of rushes §, and well plaistered it both within and without with pitch or bitumen, she put the child into it, and going privately down to the river, left it among the flags by the bank, placing his sister Miriam at a proper distance to observe the event.

But the Providence of God soon interposed in behalf of the helpless infant. A short time after the mother had left it Pharaoh's daughter ||, at-

tended by the maids of honour, came to the river to bathe herself, and seeing the basket at some distance, she ordered one of her attendants to go and bring it out of the flags. Her orders were immediately obeyed, upon which no sooner did she uncover the child than it made its mourning complaint to her in a flood of tears. This circumstance, joined to the extraordinary beauty of the infant, so moved her heart with compassion, that (notwithstanding she perceived it was one of those children whom her father, in his edict, had ordered to be drowned) she determined to preserve it, and declared her intention of having it brought up under her direction.

By this time Miriam, the child's sister, had mixed herself with the attendants of the princess, and observing with what tenderness she looked upon her brother, and at the same time hearing her intimate her desire of procuring a proper nurse for it, she very officiously offered her service to procure one. The princess accepted this offer, and ordered her to go immediately and bring the person with her, and she would wait her return. Accordingly, the girl hastened with all expedition, to the mother, and soon bringing her to the place, the princess delivered the child into her hands, ordering her to take the utmost care of it, and at the same time, told her, that whatever expences attended the rearing of it, she would defray. This, no doubt, was a welcome bargain to the mother, who, taking the child home with her, nursed it openly, her fears being removed by having a royal protection for its security.

When the child was of a proper age, his mother took him to court, in order to shew him to the princess. The graces of his person, joined to the beautiful yet noble simplicity of his countenance, so engaged her attention, that she adopted him as her own son, and gave him the name of Moses *. That he might be perfectly accomplished, she kept him constantly at court, where he was instructed in all the learning and discipline, both civil and military, used among the Egyptians, and in every other respect treated in a manner becoming the dignity of a prince of the blood † †.

Moses continued to live in Pharaoh's court till

† It is the opinion of most commentators, and the learned in general, that this inhuman edict was so abhorred by the Egyptians, that they scarce ever put it in execution; and that it was recalled immediately after the death of the king who enacted it; which time Eusebius and others place in the fourth year after the birth of Moses.

‡ Josephus, in speaking of this circumstance, relates the following story: That Amram, finding his wife with child, and fearing the consequences of the king's edict, prayed earnestly to God to put an end to that dreadful persecution; and that God appeared to him and told him, that he would, in due time, free his people from it, and that the son, who shortly would be born unto him, should prove the happy instrument of their glorious deliverance, and thereby eternalize his own name.—That this made him conceal him as long as he could, but fearing a discovery, he resolved to trust him to the care of Providence, arguing to this effect: That if the child could be concealed (as it was very difficult to do and hazardous to attempt) they must be in danger every moment, but as to the power and veracity of God, he did not doubt of it, but was assured, that whatever he had promised he would certainly make good; and with this trust and persuasion he was resolved to expose him.

§ Though this ark, or boat, is said to have been made

with rushes, it is most probable that it was formed with flags of the tree papyrus, of which the Egyptians made their paper, and which grew particularly on the banks of the Nile. Clemens Alexandrinus expressly says, that the vessel was made of papyrus, the product of the country; and his assertion is confirmed by several other profane writers.

|| Josephus calls this princess Tharmuthis; and from him Philo, who adds, that she was the king's only daughter and heir; and that being some time married without having issue, she pretended to be big with child, and to be delivered of Moses, whom she owned as her natural son. That he was esteemed so is evident, from what the Apostle to the Hebrews says, namely, "That when Moses was grown up, he scorned to be thought the son of Pharaoh's daughter." See Heb. xi. 24.

* The word *Mo*, in the Egyptian language, signifies *water*, and *yfes*, *saved*; so that the name *Moses* was very suitable to the circumstance of his being saved from perishing in the water.

†† It is uncertain at what age Moses was delivered to the princess. It is, however, reasonable to suppose that his parents had so well instructed him in their religion, and taken such care to let him know both what relation they bore to him, and what hope they had conceived of his being de-

till he arrived at the age of maturity, when he resolved to leave it, and associate himself with his persecuted brethren the Israelites. Observing their wretched state of servility, and the cruel manner in which they were treated by their merciless task-masters, he was greatly affected; and to such a degree was his indignation raised that, seeing one day an Egyptian treat an Hebrew in a very cruel manner, he immediately stepped up to his assistance, and, not perceiving any person near, slew him, and buried his body in the sand †.

As he was walking out the next day he met with two Hebrews, in strong contest with each other; upon which he admonished them to consider that they were brethren, and endeavoured to decide the quarrel between them. But he who was the aggressor, instead of listening to his advice, treated it with contempt, and upbraided him with having been guilty of murder, in killing an Egyptian.

Moses (little suspecting that any one had seen the transactions of the preceeding day) was greatly alarmed at this circumstance, being apprehensive as it was known by one, it would circulate from him amongst the multitude, and that it could not be long before it reached the ears of Pharaoh, in which case it might be attended with the most fatal consequences. To remove, therefore, these disagreeable apprehensions, and secure himself from all danger, he resolved to leave Egypt, which he accordingly did, and fled into the land of Midian, § a beautiful and fertile country situated to the east of the Red Sea.

This was the happy spot, where majesty, guarded only by rural innocence, submitted to the humble office of a shepherd, and a crook, instead of a sceptre, graced the hand of the peaceful monarch. Here Jethro (the principal man of the country) in quality both of prince and priest, enjoyed the blessings of a quiet reign, and whose daughters (laying aside the distinction of their birth) took more delight in the innocent employment of tending their father's flocks, than in all the gaities of a luxurious court.

In the plains of Midian was a well to which it was common for all the neighbouring people to drive their flocks to water. Moses, having reached this spot and being greatly fatigued, after quenching his thirst with the water, sat himself down to rest. He had not been long here

before the seven daughters of Jethro came to draw water for their flocks; but they had no sooner filled their vessels than some rude shepherds, who came on the like errand, being resolved to have their turn first served, violently seized on the water drawn by the damsels, and thereby greatly frightened them. Moses, disapproving of such ill conduct in the men, interposed in behalf of the women, and obliging the shepherds to retire, drew more water for them, and gave it to their flocks. The damsels, in the most engaging manner, made their acknowledgements to him for his services, after which they took leave, and hastened home.

Jethro expressed great surprize at the quickness of his daughters return; upon which they informed him that they had met with a stranger at the well, who not only assisted them, but likewise protected them from the insults of several rustics, who had forcibly taken from them the water they had drawn for their cattle. After hearing this story, and not seeing the person who had thus gallantly defended them, Jethro reprehended his daughters for being guilty of ingratitude and incivility, and asked, what was become of the generous stranger? They answered, they had left him at the well, upon which he ordered them immediately to return, and invite him home.

The daughters obeyed their fathers command, and, Moses being introduced into the house of Jethro, he treated him with every mark of the most distinguished respect. And, so pleased was Moses with the courteous reception he met with, that, after a short time, he expressed his willingness to take up his abode with him and become his shepherd. Jethro very readily accepted this proposal, and, to attach Moses the more strongly to his interest, gave him his daughter Zipporah in marriage ||. By this wife he had two sons, the eldest of whom he called Gershom, which signifies a *stranger*, alluding to his own condition in that country. The younger he called Eliezer, which signifies *God is my help*, in grateful acknowledgement of God's having delivered him from the hands of Pharaoh.

After Moses had been some few years in Jethro's family, the king of Egypt, who was upon the throne at the time he left the country, died; but this was not productive of the least benefit to the persecuted Israelites; his successor was no less a tyrant than himself, and their miseries, instead

signed by heaven to be the deliverer of his nation; that he made no other use of his education, which the princes gave him, than to confirm himself more and more against the superstitions and idolatry of the Egyptians; and to make himself fit to answer those ends, for which, by Providence, he seemed designed.

† We may reasonably suppose that the Egyptian whom Moses slew, through indignation at his brethren's wrongs, was one of the task-masters. It has been questioned how far this action of Moses was justifiable. Le Clerc observes, that as the Egyptian king authorized the oppression of the Israelites, it was fruitless to apply to him for redress of their grievances. The civil magistrate, who ought to have protected injured innocence, was himself become the oppressor; and, consequently, the society, being degenerated into a confederacy, in oppression and injustice, it was as lawful to use private force and resistance, as against a band of robbers and cut-throats. However, we are to remember, that the Divine hand was in all this; and that thus the way was preparing

for the grand deliverance of Israel from Egyptian oppression.

§ Midian is supposed to be that part of Arabia Petræa, which bordered on the land of Goshen, and whose metropolis (called Petrea) was situated not far from Mount Horeb. It is generally agreed that the people of this country originated from Midian, the fourth son of Abraham by Keturah, from whom they were called Midianites.

|| The sacred historian is exceeding concise in relating the transactions of this part of his own life. It is most probable, that he continued some time with Jethro, and approved himself to him by his good services, before he gave him Zipporah to wife. It is observed by Philo, *that men of great genius quickly show themselves, and are not made known by length of time*: and, therefore, he thinks, "that Jethro, being first struck with admiration at his goodly aspect, and then at his wife discourse, immediately gave him the most beautiful of all his daughters to be his wife: not staying to enquire of any one who he was, because his own most excellent qualities recommended him to his affection."

instead of being mitigated, were daily increased. At length their complaints reached heaven; the Almighty, remembering the covenant which he had made with their forefathers, looked upon them with an eye of compassion; and having resolved, in his secret providence, to make Moses the principal instrument in bringing about their deliverance, he began to prepare him for so distinguished an undertaking.

As Moses was one day attending his father-in-law's sheep, they happened to stray much farther than usual, upon which he followed them as far into the desert as Mount Horeb*. He had no sooner arrived here, than the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. So uncommon a sight greatly startled Moses, but what encreased his astonishment was, the continuance of the bush unconsumed, notwithstanding it appeared to be wholly encompassed with flames.

After reflecting some time on this extraordinary circumstance, Moses resolved to approach nearer the bush, in order, if possible, to discover the cause of its seeming to burn, and yet appearing not to be in the least damaged. But the Almighty, to prevent his irreverent approaches, and to strike the greater awe and sense of the Divine presence into him, called out of the bush, and forbade him drawing near; and to make him still more sensible of the sacredness of the place, commanded him to take off his sandals, because the ground on which he stood was holy.

Moses immediately obeyed the Divine order, upon which the Almighty discovered himself to him in these words, *I am the God of thy father the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* The frightened Moses was struck with such reverence of the Divine Majesty, and fear of the effects of his presumption, that he immediately fell on the ground and covered his face, being unable to sustain the refulgency of the Divine Presence.

When Moses had a little recovered himself, the Almighty in words to this effect addressed him: "I have seen, said he, the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters: for I know their sorrows. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of their oppressors, and to conduct them to the promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Thee have I chosen to be the instrument in this great work; therefore be of good courage, for I will send thee to Pharaoh to demand liberty of him for my people the children of Israel."

Moses had long laid aside all thoughts of attempting to rescue his brethren, the Israelites, from their thralldom; nor had he any opinion of his own abilities, should he make the attempt, to succeed in so difficult an undertaking. Wherefore, when the Almighty proposed the thing to him, he endeavoured to excuse himself, by urging his meanness and insufficiency, to take upon him the character of a Divine Ambassador. *Who am*

I, said he, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? But this difficulty the Almighty removed, by assuring him that he would be with him, and assist him in every step he took; that he would enable him, however perplexed and arduous the task, to accomplish it; and for a token of his veracity herein, told him, that within a small compass of time, he should see those very people, who were now in slavery, set free, and worshipping him on that very mountain.

Still unwilling to undertake the task, Moses desired to know, what he should say to the people, and by what name he was to call the person who sent him on the message. To which the Almighty replied, that he should tell them it was an eternal, independent, self-existent Being, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by which name he had ever gone, and by which he would continue to go, to all eternity. He then ordered him to go into Egypt, where, on his arrival, he should first assemble together the chief of the Israelites, and acquaint them with his business; after which he should go directly to the king, and demand of him their liberty, at least for three days, that they might retire into the wilderness, in order to sacrifice to their God. This request, he told Moses, the king would not, at first, grant, but, in the end, he would be glad to consent, when he should see the Divine power displayed in a variety of Miracles which would take place on sundry occasions. "I will exert myself, said he, in many miraculous operations on him and his subjects, and at last he shall permit you to depart; but you shall not go away empty, for ye shall be loaded with the spoils of the Egyptians."

It might be thought that such solemn assurances, even from the mouth of God himself, would have been sufficient to have gained a ready compliance; but Moses, either from the ideas he entertained of the difficulty of the enterprise, or from diffidence of his own abilities, was still desirous of declining the task, and objected, that when he came into Egypt, the people would probably doubt his word, and consider him as an impostor.

This objection God immediately removed by shewing him a miracle. Asking him what he had in his hand, he replied, a Rod; upon which the Almighty ordered him to throw it on the ground, which he had no sooner done, than it was immediately turned into a serpent. Moses, frightened at this sudden change of his rod, attempted to run away, but God, to encourage him, bid him take it up by the tail, which he had no sooner done than it resumed its former shape; and to convince him at the same time, that he should not want credit with the Israelites, he gave him a commission to perform the same miracle before them when he should get into Egypt.

Still farther to remove Moses's scruples, the Almighty was pleased to give him another instance

* This mount is called in the text, *the mountain of God*, which might arise either from God's appearing there now, or because of his giving the law from it afterwards. Horeb and Sinai were two tops of the same mountain, which ac-

counts for their being so frequently mentioned in scripture the one for the other; as, Acts vii. 30. St. Stephen calls that Sinai, which Moses here calls Horeb.

stance of his great and distinguished power. He ordered him to put his hand into his bosom, which he accordingly did, and on pulling it out, it was covered all over with leprosy. He then told him to put his hand into his bosom again, which he likewise did, and on taking it out the leprosy was gone, and it became as clean as at first. This miracle he likewise commissioned Moses to shew the Israelites; and moreover, to arm him sufficiently beyond all doubt, he was pleased to empower him with a third miracle. "If, says he, they will not believe these two former, thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon dry land, and the water shall become blood."

Notwithstanding these solemn and repeated assurances of the Divine aid, favour and protection, Moses still endeavoured to wave the important office, urging as a farther plea, that he wanted eloquence, the great qualification of an ambassador; and that since God had condescended to talk to him, he was much more deficient in his speech than before. But this obstacle the Almighty was likewise pleased to remove, by putting Moses in mind of his Omnipotence. *Who, said he, hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.*

Hitherto Moses had some shadow of pretence for his unwillingness to go into Egypt; but now, all his objections being answered, he, in very plain terms, desired to be excused from the enterprise, and begged of God, that he would be pleased to appoint some other person in his stead.

So long as Moses had any thing to plead in excuse for not going, God heard him patiently, and graciously condescended to remove his doubts; but, when all this was done, and he at length gave an absolute refusal, the Almighty was greatly displeased, though at the same time he did not display any instance of his resentment. On the contrary, he resumed Moses's last objection (which he had already answered in general) and shewed him, in a more particular manner, how he should supply that defect: "Is not, said he, Aaron, the Levite, thy brother? He is eloquent †, and I will appoint him to meet thee. Tell him what I have said; and be assured that I will always assist you both, and direct you what to say. He shall be the orator, and thou shalt be to him instead of God. And to strengthen thy commission, and give thee credit among my people, take this rod in thy hand, for with it shalt thou be enabled to perform many miracles."

† Moses excelled in wisdom and conduct, Aaron, his brother, in eloquence. Such is the wise order of Providence, which has dispensed different gifts to different persons, that they may each be assisting to one another, and knit more firmly the band of society! Thus Polydamus in Homer, Iliad 13, tells Hector, God gives to different men different accomplishments:

To some the pow'rs of bloody war belong,
To some sweet music, and the charm of song;
To few, and wond'rous few, has Jove assign'd
A wife, extensive, all consid'ring mind.

POPE.

1 The best interpretation that can be given of this extraordinary circumstance is, that Moses having deferred the

Every obstacle being removed, and the most evincing demonstrations of a miraculous power, together with the protection of Divine Providence, given to Moses, he was at length prevailed on to accept the commission. He accordingly went first to his father-in-law Jethro, and, without telling him the occasion, requested permission to go and visit his brethren, who were then in the land of Egypt.

Jethro readily consented to Moses's request; upon which, taking his wife and children with him, he proceeded on his journey. He had not, however, gone far, when an angel appeared to him, and, with a stern countenance, and flaming sword in his hand, threatened to kill him, because, either from the persuasions of his wife, or from his own neglect, he had not yet circumcised his younger son Eliezer. As soon as Zipporah understood the cause of the Divine displeasure, she immediately took an instrument, made of a sharp flint, and with it circumcised the child; which being done, the angry vision, after giving signs that God was appeased, disappeared ‡.

While Moses was on his journey to Egypt, Aaron, by a Divine revelation, was informed thereof, and ordered to go, and meet him in the wilderness. Aaron obeyed the Divine command, and met his brother at a small distance from Mount Horeb. After mutual embraces and endearments, Moses opened to him the purport of his commission, the instructions he had received from God, and the miraculous works he was empowered to perform.

The two brothers, being thus joined in the same commission (though Moses was the sovereign) repaired, with all expedition, to Egypt. Immediately on their arrival they called an assembly of the chief elders of the Israelites, to whom Aaron declared the message which God had sent by Moses, while the latter, to confirm the truth of his Divine mission, wrought the several miracles, which God had appointed, in the presence of the whole assembly. In consequence of this they all appeared fully convinced that he was a true prophet come from the God of their fathers, who had, at length, commiserated their afflictions, and sent him now to deliver them from their bondage; and with this persuasion they all knelt down, and worshipped God.

A few days after this, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh's court, and, having obtained admission to the king, requested of him, that he would permit the Israelites to go three days journey into the wilderness, in order to perform a solemn service to the Lord their God. But the haughty tyrant not only refused complying with their request,

circumcision of his youngest son, (perhaps in compliance to his wife) God was peculiarly offended with him for such neglect; not only because Moses knew that no child could be admitted a member of the Jewish community, nor be entitled to the blessings of God's covenant with those people, without circumcision; but also because *his* example was of the greatest consequence: for who would have regarded the law, if the law-giver himself had neglected it? Zipporah, therefore, conscious of her husband's danger, as well as of her own negligence, immediately performed the office herself; in consequence of which the cause being removed, God's anger also ceased; and he suffered Moses to pursue his journey. Zipporah is supposed to have performed the office, because Moses was in too great a consternation to do it himself.

quest, but most impiously arraigned the Divine prerogative, and called in question the existence of the only wise and true God in these presumptuous words, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.*

Pharaoh suspected that the Israelites had a design of revolting from his service, and that they had been laying schemes to get out of his dominions. This to him was an argument that they had too much leisure time from business; and that the most effectual way to check their contrivances would be to curtail their vacant hours; he therefore ordered greater tasks, and more work to be laid on them. He reprimanded Moses and Aaron for going among the people, and interrupting them in their employments; and strictly charged the task-masters not to allow them any more straw, and yet to exact the same tale of bricks from them without abatement.

The task-masters acquainted their under officers with this severe injunction, who immediately communicated it to the people, and they were accordingly forced to wander about the country to seek for straw, the task-masters, at the same time, exacting from them their usual number of bricks; and when they were unable to perform their task, the under officers, who were Israelites, and whom the task-masters had set over them, were called to account and punished.

Not knowing from whence this unreasonable severity proceeded, whether from the royal edict, or the rigour of the task-masters, the under officers addressed the king himself, and, in the most humble manner, laid their grievances before him. But so far were they from receiving any redress, that the answer returned them was, "That the king would have his edict fully executed, and insisted on having their full number of bricks, though he was resolved not to allow them any straw."

This answer greatly afflicted the poor Israelites, inasmuch, that they were almost driven to despair. On their return from the king they happened to meet Moses and Aaron, and supposing them to be the cause of the additional burthen laid on them, expressed their grief and resentment in words to this effect: "That they had taken care to infuse an odium into the king against them, and given him a plausible handle to destroy them, which they wished to God might fall on their own heads."

These bitter expressions greatly afflicted Moses, who, retiring to a private place, addressed himself to God in this humble expostulation: "Why, said he, O Lord, hast thou thus afflicted thy people? For since I spoke to Pharaoh in thy name, he hath treated them with more seve-

rity than before; and they are more unlikely to be delivered than ever."

The great concern Moses had for the oppression of the Israelites was certainly the cause of his forgetting the promise which God had given him, as also what he had foretold relative to the perverseness of Pharaoh. But, notwithstanding this the Almighty was pleased to give him fresh assurances of his Divine intentions of removing the Israelites from their state of bondage: "I am the Lord, said he, the Almighty God, that appeared unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Was I not known to them by my name Jehovah? Be assured that I the Lord, who made a covenant with them to give their posterity the land of Canaan, have heard their complaints and remembered my promise. Therefore say thus to the children of Israel, I am Jehovah, who exist only of myself, and give existence to all beings. Tell them I will deliver them from the Egyptian slavery, with the power of my Almighty arm, and inflict heavy judgements on them that oppress them. Nor will I only deliver you all from this bondage, but I will take you under my immediate protection: ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I am Jehovah, the Lord, that promiseth this, and that can, and will do it."

Encouraged by this gracious and Divine declaration, Moses immediately repaired to the Israelites, to whom he delivered his message as God had commanded. But such was their affliction of mind, in consequence of the increase of their servitude, and which they attributed to have arisen from him, that they paid no attention to what he said. They were prejudiced against him, and rather looked upon him as an enemy, than as one who was desirous of procuring their enlargement.

The Almighty, fully resolved to pursue the ends of his Providence, again commanded Moses to go to the king of Egypt, and demand the liberty of the Israelites. Having been so roughly dismissed from Pharaoh's presence before, and so unkindly rejected by the Israelites, Moses endeavoured to decline the errand, by drawing an argument from each circumstance: "Since, says he, the children of Israel, thine own people, would not hear me, though what I offered was so much to their advantage, how can I expect that so wicked a prince as Pharaoh is should pay any attention to so insignificant a person § as I am, and in a matter so much to his loss."

To remove this objection, the Almighty was pleased to address himself to Moses in words to this effect: "Consider, said he, I have made thee as a God || to Pharaoh, and Aaron, thy brother, shall be thy interpreter, or orator. Thou

§ It is remarkable, that in the text Moses here calls himself an uncircumcised person, or rather a man whose lips had not been circumcised. See Exod. vi. 12. By this we are to understand, that he meant no more than that he was not possessed of that fluency of speech which was necessary on so important an occasion. The word *circumcised* is phraseologically used by the Hebrews on several occasions, as when they call any one *uncircumcised in heart, mind, or tongue*, they mean no more than that the person spoken of is not so perfect in these particulars as might be wished. Besides, as

circumcision was the first and greatest sacrament among them, so uncircumcision was esteemed the greatest scandal and disgrace. The phrase, therefore, naturally and clearly expresses the humble opinion Moses had of himself, his unsuitness for such an office, and his inability to persuade or prevail with so haughty a monarch as Pharaoh.

|| The word here translated a God, signifies a prince, a counsellor, or governor; and as Moses was to work many wonders in the land of Egypt, so there is no doubt but Pharaoh would look upon him as a person endued with supernatural

“ Thou shalt tell him all that I have commanded thee, and ye shall demand of Pharaoh the deliverance of my people. And that thou mayest not be discouraged by a repulse, as before, take notice, that Pharaoh shall give no credit to what thou sayest, that I may thereby shew my power and wonders to him and his people, and deliver the children of Israel by the strength of my hand. For since Pharaoh has begun to harden his heart in contemptuously treating me, and abusing my people, I will now permit him to go on in his obstinate humour, that I may exert my power in miraculous operations in the land of Egypt. Therefore, when ye come into Pharaoh's presence, and he shall demand a miracle of you, to convince him of the truth of your mission, thou shalt direct Aaron to cast his rod on the ground before Pharaoh, and it shall be turned into a serpent.”

In consequence of these instructions, Moses and Aaron went again to the king, and repeated their demand of his dismissing the Israelites. Pharaoh desired them to shew him some miracle, whereby he might be induced to believe, that the God, of whom they had so much spoken, had really sent for them. Upon this Aaron threw down his rod, which had no sooner touched the ground, than it was changed into a living serpent.

Though Pharaoh was somewhat surprized at this incident, yet he was determined, if possible, to make it appear of no great importance. To effect this, he sent for his principal magicians, whom he ordered to try, if, by their magical arts, they could cause the like transmigration. They obeyed the king's commands, and, to his great satisfaction, their attempts succeeded*. They threw down their rods, which were immediately changed into serpents, only with this remarkable circumstance, that Aaron's rod swallowed up (while in the figure of a serpent) all those of the magicians, after which it resumed its accustomed form. It might have been supposed, that this would have been sufficient to have con-

vinced the proud monarch of the superior power of the God of Israel; but his heart was so averse to the thoughts of parting with the Hebrews, that it did not in the least affect him.

As this miracle made no impression on the obstinate tyrant, the Almighty resolved to make use of more forcible scourges, and to afflict the Egyptians with such a succession of plagues as should compel them to dismiss the long-enslaved Israelites. Having observed to Moses, that Pharaoh's heart was hardened, he ordered him to take the rod, which had been turned into a serpent, and (in company with his brother Aaron) to throw himself in the way of Pharaoh, at his usual time of coming to the banks of the river Nile. That as soon as he saw the king, he should again demand of him the liberty of the Israelites; and that if he still continued obstinate, as a farther sign that they were messengers from God, he should give the rod to Aaron, who, by striking it on the water, it should be immediately changed into blood,

In obedience to the Divine command, Moses, at the time appointed, went to the bank of the river, soon after which the king arriving, he accosted him in words to this effect: “ That he was sent from the Almighty God of the Hebrews, to demand the release of the Israelites, and that if he did not comply with his request, but still remained obstinate, his God should not only afflict him for his perverseness, but bring down the most heavy judgements on his people.”

The infidel prince, regardless of the order of God, by these two appointed missionaries, still persisted in his resolution (so little did the first miracle operate on his mind) of detaining the Israelites, and continuing them in their wretched state of bondage. Finding all remonstrances in vain, Moses delivered his rod to Aaron, who, striking the water with it, as God had commanded him, it changed into blood, and so continued for the space of seven days, by means of which the fish were suffocated, and the inhabitants compelled to dig for water to allay their

tural power. It was then beginning to grow common among the heathen nations, particularly the Egyptians, to rank their great men among the number of their gods; and, therefore, when the Lord here speaks to Moses, he does not say that he made him an object of worship, but only that he would endue him with so much power, that the Egyptians would look upon him as a God.

* The antient magicians were a kind of profane conjurors, who, claiming Divine assistance, used frequently to contend with each other, in proof of the power of those deities whose assistance they claimed. That they were aided by the craft and subtlety of those beings, whom they idolized and worshipped, there can be no question; from the history of idolatry, and from the cessation of these diabolical operations, upon the establishment of Christianity. However, whether these magicians of Pharaoh were or were not assisted by evil spirits, there seems no great difficulty in their performing this prodigy; which they came ready prepared to perform, and which, by their juggling tricks, they might certainly have done with facility, and to the absolute deception of Pharaoh and his servants. But one would have thought, that the evident superiority of Moses and Aaron, discovered by their rod, (that is, the serpent, into which the rod was turned) swallowing up the rods, i. e. the serpents of the magicians, would have convinced them, that the power, by which these Israelites acted, was really Divine. This was an evident prognostic of the event of the

ensuing contest, wherein Jehovah vanquished and destroyed all the gods of Egypt in reality, as he did here in symbols. Some have supposed, and Josephus among the rest, that what the magicians produced were only the appearances of serpents: but the text knows no distinction. Nothing can be plainer than that real serpents were produced by the magicians. “ If it be asked, say the authors of the Universal History, why God suffered the magicians to act thus (either by their skill in juggling, or) by a power borrowed from the devil; in order to invalidate, if possible, those miracles which his servant wrought by his Divine power;—the following reasons may be given for it: First, it was necessary that those magicians should be suffered to exert the utmost of their power against Moses, in order to clear him from the imputation of magic or sorcery: for, as the notion of such extraordinary art was, at this time, very rife, not only among the Egyptians, but all other nations; if they had not entered into this strenuous competition with him, and been at length overcome by him, both the Hebrews and Egyptians would have been more apt to have attributed all his miracles to his skill in magic, than to the Divine Power. Secondly, it was necessary, in order to confirm the faith of the wavering and desponding Israelites, by making them see the difference between Moses's acting by the power of GOD, and the forcerers by that of Satan. And, lastly, in order to preserve them afterwards from being seduced, by any false miracles, from the true worship of God.”

their thirst. As it was known that Moses received his education among the Egyptians, Pharaoh concluded, that all this was performed by magic skill. Wherefore, calling for his magicians, he put them upon the like trial; who, taking some water out of the wells they had dug, so artfully changed its colour, as to make it appear like blood. Though this was but a delusion, yet Pharaoh was satisfied in his own mind that what Moses and Aaron had done was not the effect of any supernatural power, but a meer trick of art; and therefore still resolved not to permit the departure of the Israelites.

But the Almighty was pleased to display still farther miracles before this impious and obstinate tyrant. When the seven days were expired, and the waters had resumed their natural qualities, Moses, at the command of God, accosted Pharaoh again, and renewed his solicitations for the delivery of the Israelites, threatening, on his refusal, to bring upon the land such prodigious numbers of frogs, as should visit him and his subjects in their most private recesses.

Pharaoh, regardless of these threats, defied him; upon which Moses ordered Aaron to take his rod, and stretch forth his hand with it over the rivers, which in an instant affected all the waters of Egypt, that, not waiting for the slow productions of nature, the animated streams unburthened themselves upon the land in shoals of frogs, which immediately invaded all parts of the country, and infested even the royal palace itself †.

The obstinate and perverse king had again recourse to his magicians, who, by their mimic power, so deluded Pharaoh as to make him believe they had wrought the like miracle. This hardened his heart for a time; but the loathsome plague continuing, and pursuing his people wherever they went, he was at length forced to apply to Moses and Aaron, to whom he promised that the Israelites should have their liberty, provided their God would remove so infestuous a plague. *Intreat the Lord, said he, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord.*

Moses demanded the time when this should be put to an issue, upon which the next day was conjunctively agreed on. Accordingly, Moses, in order to fulfil his part of the contract, after leaving Pharaoh, retired to a private place, and, addressing himself to God, humbly besought him to remove the plague of the frogs from the land of Egypt. The Almighty was pleased to listen to Moses's solicitation: the frogs soon died, which the people gathered together in heaps; but they were so numerous, that before they could be removed, the scent, which was exceeding obnoxious, spread itself throughout the whole country.

As Moses had now fulfilled his part of the

contract, he naturally expected that Pharaoh would have performed his; but the impious monarch, vainly imagining that the artillery of Divine vengeance was now exhausted, unfaithfully broke his word, and still refused to let the Israelites depart.

This breach of promise so offended the Almighty, that he resolved to treat the haughty tyrant in a more severe manner than he had hitherto done. As yet God had given him previous notice of the judgments he intended to denounce, that he might have the opportunity of escaping them; but now, without giving him the least intimation of his design, he commanded Moses to direct Aaron to stretch out his rod, and strike the dust with it, that it might *become lice throughout all the land of Egypt*. Aaron had no sooner obeyed the Divine command, than the animated dust was immediately turned into swarms of vermin, which not only infested the human species, but also the beast of the field. Pharaoh again had recourse to his magicians, who (though they had faintly imitated the former plagues) now attempted this in vain: they owned their art outdone, and acknowledged this to be the inimitable work of a Divine hand.

But notwithstanding this, Pharaoh's heart was so hardened, that he would not pay the least attention to the solicitations of Moses; upon which the Almighty was pleased to give him another summons, in words to this effect: "Rise up, (says he to Moses) early in the morning, and meet Pharaoh as he comes to the river: tell him, Thus saith the Lord: let my people go, that they may serve me, or I will send swarms of flies upon thee and thy people, which shall fill their houses, and cover the face of the earth. And that thou mayest know, that this is brought as a judgment upon thee and thy subjects, for oppressing my people, I will, on that day, separate the land of Goshen, in which my servants dwell, from the rest of Egypt, that the flies shall not molest them."

Moses, in conformity to the Divine command, delivered this message to Pharaoh, whose obstinacy and perverseness were so great, that he still refused the Israelites to depart. In consequence of this, the next day, clouds of swarming insects filled the air, which in numberless troops descended to the earth, and, with their unusual noise, surprized and affrighted the wretched inhabitants. All attempts to remove this dreadful calamity proved vain and fruitless; their most private recesses could not secure them from the poisonous stings of these obnoxious animals, and a succession of painful misery invaded them on all sides. The magicians beheld, with confusion, this direful plague, and no more attempted to offer any imitation. A general horror was spread throughout the whole country, and every part echoed with the cries of tortured men and cattle.

Not

† This plague of the frogs, as well as that of the water being changed into blood, was excellently adapted to subvert the superstitions of Egypt, and to demonstrate the over-ruling power of the Almighty; for as the bank of the river Nile was the grand scene of the magical operations of the Egyptians, in which *blood and frogs* made a principal part of the

apparatus; so, by commanding that river to produce such an infinite multitude of these creatures to annoy them, God, with wonderful propriety, adapted their chastisement to the nature of their crimes: for frogs were not only the instruments of their abominations, but likewise the emblems of those impure demons whom they invoked by their incantations.

Not being able longer to endure this dreadful calamity, and finding no likelihood of its being removed, the obstinate Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and, in a fullen dissatisfied tone, bade them go and sacrifice to their God; but with this injunction, that they should not pass beyond the bounds of Egypt. He was desirous of obtaining relief, but, at the same time, was unwilling to part with a people, from whose slavery he had reaped such great advantage. Being a stranger to the true God, he did not conceive that the Israelites could not acceptably sacrifice to their God whilst under Egyptian bondage.

Moses, desirous of convincing rather than inflaming, the infidel prince, prudently answered, We cannot sacrifice to our God in this land, for that would be an affront to the Egyptians †, and they will be revenged on us. Permit us, therefore, to avoid their resentment, by going three days journey into the wilderness, where we can sacrifice to our God in the manner he hath commanded.

In reply to this, the haughty monarch said, "If nothing else will serve you but to go into the desert, I will let you go; but remember, it must not be far. And in return for this concession, I desire you will intreat your God to remove the plague."

Moses promised to intercede for him, but at the same time cautioned him to be sincere in what he said, and not violate his engagements as he had before done. Leaving Pharaoh, Moses retired to a proper place, where he addressed himself to God, beseeching him to remove the plague of the flies. His prayers were accordingly heard, and the insects soon took their flight. But this obstacle was no sooner removed, than the haughty tyrant reassumed his former obstinacy, and peremptorily forbid the Israelites worshipping their God in the way and manner he had directed.

This additional provocation so incensed the Almighty against Pharaoh, that he again sent Moses to him with this message: "Tell him, said he, Thus saith the God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me, or be assured I will visit all thy cattle that are in the field with a grievous murrain; and to make thee still more sensible of my Omnipotence, I will, by a wonderful distinction, preserve the cattle of my people, whilst I destroy those of the Egyptians."

Pharaoh paid no more attention to this message than he had done to the former, in consequence of which, the very next day, this awful threat was most severely executed. The generous horse loathed his full manger and loved pastures, and sunk beneath his rider; the ass and camel could no longer support their burdens, or bear their

own weight; the labouring ox fell dead before the plough; the harmless sheep died bleating, and the faithful dogs lay gasping by them.

Though this was certainly a most horrid spectacle, yet it made not the least impression on the hardened Pharaoh, who still resolved to brave heaven with his impious perverseness. Remembering what Moses had said of the preservation of the Israelites' cattle, he sent to Goshen to learn how it had fared with them, and was assured that not one of their cattle had died, or received the least infection. This circumstance was certainly sufficient to have convinced him that it was no casualty, but a direct judgment upon him, seeing that it exactly answered the Divine prediction. But notwithstanding this, his heart was so callous, that he still preserved the resolution of not suffering the Israelites to depart.

These means proving ineffectual, the Almighty, in order to make some impression on the mind of this impious monarch, determined to afflict him and his people with a plague, and that without giving him the least notice of his intentions. He accordingly commanded Moses and Aaron to take ashes of the furnace, and throw them into the air in the presence of Pharaoh. This was accordingly done, upon which the ashes soon spread the dire contagion, and the tainted air infected the Egyptian blood with its pernicious influence. The most inveterate boils and ulcers appeared on their flesh, and their whole constitution became a noisome spring of sores. So universal was this plague, that even the magicians (who, it is probable, would willingly have once more tried their skill) were affected, and that, in such manner, that they dared not appear in public*.

Pharaoh's obstinacy, which before proceeded from an implacable hatred to the chosen people of God, now arose from the meer hardness of his heart, and notwithstanding he must be sensible that the present plague was the immediate effect of a Divine and supernatural direction, yet he continued firm in his resolution of detaining the Israelites. But the Almighty, determined to make some impression on him, rendered the very powers of heaven subservient to his Divine purpose, giving this charge to his servant Moses: "Go, says he, early in the morning, to the king of Egypt, and tell him, that I, the God of the Hebrews, demand the liberty of my people, that they may worship me; which, if he refuse, he may be assured that I will shower my plagues upon him and his people; and I will make him know that I am the only God on earth. Say farther to him: If, when lately I smote the cattle with a murrain, I had smitten thee and thy people

"with

† The meaning of this expression is, that the animals which they were to sacrifice to the Lord, being those which were worshipped by the Egyptians, it would be such an affront and abomination to them, as would endanger the lives of the Israelites. Herodotus tells us, that the Egyptians esteemed it a profanation to sacrifice any kind of cattle, except swine, bulls, calves, and geese; and that heifers, rams and goats (the usual sacrifices of the Israelites) were, by them, held sacred. It is, therefore, no wonder that the Israelites should wish to offer up their sacrifices in a place detached

from the sight of the Egyptians, justly suspecting, that had they not, it might have been attended with fatal consequences.

* Baffled before, and, indeed, wholly conquered, the magicians, it is probable, still continued about Pharaoh, and were eye-witnesses of the several transactions recorded: but now, to reduce them to the lowest contempt, and to destroy the least shadow of influence, they share in the common calamity, and, afflicted with the same disease, are unable even to show their heads! Henceforth we hear no more of them: so complete was the triumph of Moses and Aaron.

“ with pestilence, thou hadst been cut off from
 “ the earth. But I have reserved thee to shew
 “ my power, and by the judgments I shall in-
 “ flict will I make known my name to all the
 “ world. Oppress not, nor detain my people ;
 “ for, if thou dost, To-morrow †, by this time,
 “ unless thou submittest thyself, I will send such
 “ a storm of hail from heaven upon Egypt as
 “ never was known since it has been a nation.
 “ And that thou mayest not lose what cattle the
 “ murrain left, which being not in the field
 “ escaped that plague, send thy servants, and
 “ let them drive them under shelter; for upon
 “ every man and beast, which shall be found in
 “ the field, the storm shall fall, and they shall
 “ surely die.”

So careless, as well as impious, was Pharaoh, that even this declaration would not make him submit, though his own life, as well as those of his people, were in imminent danger. But some of them, who had been witnesses of the dreadful wrath of God, made a prudent use of the Divine caution, and, housing their cattle in time, they were preserved from the general destruction.

The appointed time being come, Moses, in obedience to the Divine command, waved his rod in the air, which soon began to murmur in imperfect sounds, till the full charged clouds, with impetuous force, burst and discharged themselves in such horrid peals of thunder, as to shake the whole frame of nature. This was succeeded by a stormy shower of hail, which covered the ground with the scattered remains of trees and houses, and the dead bodies of men and beast. Nor did the Divine vengeance stop here: the heavens discharged a body of liquid fire, which, darting on the ground, glided over the waters, and filled every place with the most dreadful horror.

The haughty tyrant began now to be impressed with those sensations to which he had hitherto been a stranger. Seeing all nature, as he imagined, ready to dissolve, he melted into penitence, and, sending for Moses and Aaron, confessed himself guilty. *I have sinned this time; (said he) the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Intreat the Lord that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.* Moses promised to comply with his request, but at the same time assured him, he knew there was no sincerity in his heart; and that his seeming repentance was only the effect of his fright.

Moses, however, in conformity to his promise, addressed himself to the Almighty, beseeching him to remove the plague; which was

no sooner done, than his prediction was verified; for, when Pharaoh found the storm was ceased, and all was calm and serene, his fears totally vanished, his perverseness returned, and he resolved still to keep the Israelites in a state of bondage.

The Almighty was now pleased to make another trial, and to send his servant Moses to apprise the haughty and perfidious tyrant of his intentions. The message he delivered to Moses was prefaced by his reasons (as, indeed, he had done before) why he permitted Pharaoh to continue in his obstinacy; the substance of which, together with the message itself, were to this effect: “ I have (says he) hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and the hearts of his servants, that I may shew these my wonders before them, and that thou mayest tell, in the hearing of thy sons, and the Israelites to succeeding generations, what prodigies I have wrought in Egypt, that ye may all know that I am the Lord, the Almighty Jehovah. Wherefore, go to Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Why dost thou persist in thy obstinacy? Let my people go, that they may serve me, or I will bring the locusts into thy land to-morrow, which shall come in such swarms, as to cover the surface of the earth, and devour all the products of it that have escaped the former plagues. And this shall prove such a plague as none of thy predecessors ever saw.”

This message Moses carefully delivered to Pharaoh in the presence of his nobles, and not receiving any answer to it, he retired. As soon as he was gone, Pharaoh’s courtiers, still sensibly impressed with the late calamities, and fearful that he was about to call down more plagues upon them, very roughly accosted their king, desiring him to let the Israelites go and serve their God, lest, for his obstinacy, not only himself, but also the whole people of his kingdom, should be totally destroyed.

The importunity of Pharaoh’s courtiers prevailed more than God’s threats and judgments. He immediately dispatched a messenger after Moses and Aaron, who accordingly returning, he told them they might go and serve their God; but under this limitation, that it should only be the men, for that all the women and children should be left behind. This, however, would not do for Moses: he insisted that all the Israelites should go, both old and young, sons and daughters; nay, and their flocks and herds, “ for,” said he, “ we must hold a feast to the Lord, and all must be at it ‡.” Pharaoh considered this demand

† The Almighty marks the time of this terrible event in the most exact manner, to shew his supremacy over all the parts of nature: to shew that *fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy winds and thunder*, were ready to fulfil his word. Psal. cxlviii. 8. The goodness of God, who, in the midst of judgment, remembers mercy, is very remarkable in the notice he gives the Egyptians to preserve their cattle and servants: and we find, that though Pharaoh and his courtiers disregarded these admonitions, yet there were some among the people who feared the word of the Lord, and accordingly profited by that fear, as every man certainly will do who pays a proper attention to the word of God.

‡ Pharaoh, brought to some degree of sense and feeling by his own wife and moderate counsellors, appears to con-

sent to the departure of the Israelites; but, as it were, in an instant, his perverse heart makes a reserve. It is evident that he feared the absolute and entire loss of the Hebrews, and, consequently, of the advantages which they brought to his kingdom: and, therefore, willing to secure a pledge in hand, he consents to the departure of the men, but would have the little ones and the flocks remain behind. This was a condition not to be accepted: for a perfect redemption of every Israelite from Egyptian slavery was the great object of Moses’s mission; who informs Pharaoh, that a solemn festival was to be held unto the Lord; upon which occasion, it was usual for the whole body of the nation, men, women and children, to unite in the celebration.

demand as not only peremptory, but insolent : he therefore bade them look to it, and consider well what they insisted on ; after which, in a very threatening manner, he dismissed them.

This repulse occasioned another judgment to be inflicted on the miserable subjects of an infidel king ; for Moses, by the Divine command, stretched out his hand, with the rod in it, and immediately a scorching wind blew all that day and the succeeding night ; the consequence of which was, the next morning there appeared endless legions of locusts §, which, in a short time, so devoured the fruits of the earth, that it became, as it were, quite naked : the happy productions arising from the fertile Nile, and all that bountiful nature afforded, were carried off by these airy

§ This must have been a dreadful plague indeed, as will evidently appear from the wonderful accounts given of these devouring animals by different authors, who have been eyewitnesses of the devastations made by them in different parts of the world.

Thevenot, in his travels, tells us, “ That in part of Scythia, which the Cossacks now inhabit, there are infinite numbers of locusts (especially in dry seasons) which the north-east wind brings over from Tartary, Circassia and Mingrelia, which places are seldom or ever free from them. That they fly in the air all compact together like a vast cloud, sometimes fifteen or eighteen miles long, and about ten or twelve miles broad, so that they quite darken the sky, and make the brightest day obscure ; and that wherever they light, they devour all the corn in less than two hours time, and frequently make a famine in the country. These insects, says he, live not above six months ; and when they are dead, the stench arising from them so corrupts and infects the air, that it very often breeds dreadful pestilences.”

The account given of these animals by Aldrovandus and Frisclius is as follows : “ That, in the year of Our Lord 852 an infinite number of them was seen to fly over twenty miles in Germany in one day, in the manner of a formed army, divided in several squadrons, and having their quarters apart when they rested ; that the captains marched a day’s journey before the rest, and chose the most opportune places for their camp ; that they never removed till sun-rising, at which time they went away in as much order as an army of men could do ; that, at last, having done great mischief, wherever they passed they were driven, by a violent wind, into the Belgic Ocean, and there drowned ; but that, being cast by the waves upon the shore, they covered an hundred and forty acres of land, and caused a great pestilence in the country.”

Sir Hans Sloane (in his Natural History of Jamaica) gives a very particular account of these insects having infested that island, which, with respect to their destructive nature, justly corroborates with the before-mentioned. The description he gives of them is as follows : “ This locust, (says he) from the head to the end of the wings was two inches and a half long, its body was two inches in length, in the abdomen were seven incisures, it had two antennæ each half an inch long, a large purple and brown head, with two lenticular eyes each prominent, three pair or six legs, taking their origin from the thorax, the hindmost pair being thick at the thighs and prickly, two inches long, more than twice as long as those before, those in the middle longer than the foremost, the wings membranaceous, of an ash, inclining to red or purple colour, with many brown spots on them : It had three incisures on its back, which was guarded, as it were, with armour.”

“ This locust (continues Sir Hans) is the same with those eaten in Barbary ; they dry them in ovens to preserve them, then either eat them alone, or pounded and mixed with milk ; and they are, without question, fed on by the inhabitants of many places in the world.”

That locusts were eaten by the antient Persians, Syrians, Africans, and almost all the Asiatics, is asserted by Diodorus Siculus ; and there is no doubt but they were eaten by the antient Canaanites. Clenard affirms, that he saw waggon loads of locusts brought into Fez as food for the citizens ; and Hirstenius, that about the borders of Jordan the inhabitants pull off their wings and feet, hang them up, and

pillagers, and nothing appeared but horror and desolation throughout the land of Egypt.

The hardened Pharaoh was more sensibly affected at this plague, than he had been at any of the former. He plainly saw that the destruction of the fruits of the earth must be succeeded by the destruction of man and beast. Wherefore, sending for Moses and Aaron, he, in a more suppliant manner, addressed them in words to this effect : “ I have, indeed offended Jehovah, your God, in refusing to obey his command, and you, in so often breaking my word with you : forgive me this offence, and intreat your God to avert this judgment, that I and my people perish not by devouring famine.”

Moses, once more compassionating the case of the

after they are fermented by the heat, are esteemed good food.

The accounts given by the before-mentioned writers relative to the dreadful destruction made by these animals is farther corroborated by the Sieur Beauplan, in his History of the Ukraine. After relating many remarkable circumstances, he gives a particular description of the nature of their propagation : “ These vermin (says he) increase and multiply thus : they generate in October, and with their tails make a hole in the ground, and having laid 300 eggs in it, and covered them with their feet, they die, for they never live above six months and an half ; and though the rains should come then, it would not destroy the eggs ; nor does the frost, though never so sharp, hurt them, but they continue till spring, which is about Mid-April ; when, the sun warming the earth, they hatch, and leap all about, being six weeks before they can fly, without going far from the place where they received life ; but when stronger, and that they can fly, they go wherever the wind carries them. If it should happen that the North-East prevails, when they first take their flight, it carries them all into the Black Sea ; but if the wind blows from any other quarter, they go into some other country to do mischief. But if the rains fall when they begin to hatch, and continue but eight or ten days, all the eggs are lost ; and so in summer, eight or ten days continual rain kills all the locusts upon the ground, for they cannot fly, and so people are delivered from them. But if the summer prove dry (which is most usual) they are tormented with them till they die in October.—This is what I have observed several years in those parts concerning the locusts, which are as thick as a man’s finger, and three or four inches in length.”

In the year 1748 great numbers of these insects visited different parts of England, but, happily, their stay was of short duration. A very ingenious naturalist, who, at the time, took great pains in noticing their form, gives us the following description of them : “ This insect (says he) in shape, nearly resembles a grass-hopper ; it hops and flies in the same manner, but is more robust, of a different colour, and has four large wings, like those of the pond-keeper or horse-stinger : they are transparent and brown, divided into panes by a small black line, and their texture is very elastic ; the wings of one, whose body was two inches and an half in length, being extended, measured five inches from point to point ; some have taken notice of a much larger size. The body is scaly, the head large, and the face streaked with brown and white ; the eyes are very bright, and of an hazle colour. It has jaws on each side, which open and shut horizontally, of a black, hard, horny substance, which, when opened, discover a tongue like a small seed French bean ; they are round like a pair of pincers, meeting with great exactness, and are not keen but blunt. Over these jaws where they meet, it lets fall a thin cover, which it contracts and folds at pleasure, and puts forth a considerable distance from the mouth ; and probably this thin substance is of use to draw towards it blades of grass, or any other thing which it eats of a yielding nature. An horse fly being put into a vial to one of these locusts was devoured by it, in a short time.

Such is the nature of those destructive animals called locusts ; the accounts we have given of which are sufficient to convey to the mind a proper idea how dreadful the punishment of this plague must have been to the Egyptians, more especially when we consider, that those locusts were such as were never known before.

the justly afflicted king, addressed himself to the Almighty in his behalf; and the locusts, by the force of a strong westerly wind, were driven into the Red Sea. But this plague was no sooner removed, than Pharaoh's obstinacy and contempt of God's commands, returned, and he again refused the departure of the Israelites.

All these methods to reduce Pharaoh to an obedience of the Divine command proving ineffectual, the Almighty commanded Moses to stretch forth his hand towards heaven, that there might be an universal darkness, such as before had never been known, throughout the land of Egypt.

Moses obeyed the Divine command, immediately on which such solid and thick clouds of darkness invaded the sky, that nature seemed at once to be involved in one dreadful eclipse: the sun no longer encouraged the lower world with his cheerful beams; the moon, with the stars no more illuminated the air, and so dismal was the aspect of all things, that nature appeared as if about to return to her original chaos.

This dreadful scene of horror lasted three days, and the haughty Pharaoh was so affected at it, that, though he had long stood immovable against the threats and judgements of God, yet he now, fearing an universal dissolution, and frightened at the continual terror* of this long night, began seriously to relent; and sending for Moses, thus addressed him: "Ye may go, said he, with your little ones, and serve the Lord; but for my security, I would have you leave your flocks and herds behind."

But this not being absolutely consistent with the Divine command, Moses would not accept it. He told Pharaoh, that it was the express command of their God to remove with *all* their substance; and that they knew not in what manner they were to offer sacrifice to their God, nor should they till they came into the wilderness.

The haughty tyrant, incensed at the non-compliance of Moses to what he esteemed a distinguished indulgence, commanded him to be gone,

|| The Red Sea here mentioned was no other than what we call the Arabian Gulph, which lies to the east of Egypt, and joins to the southern ocean. In the Arabian language it is called the Sea of Suph, which signifies, a sea near the borders of which grow great numbers of rushes. Some have imagined that the water of this Gulph, or Sea, was red; but that notion is improbable, for either the name was derived from the red mountains that are situated on each side of it; or, more probably, from the violence of the sun's beams giving it a reddish appearance.

* It is the opinion of some commentators, that during these three days darkness, the Egyptians were visited by dreadful visions and spectres; which opinion is greatly strengthened in the *Book of Wisdom*, chap. xvii. Undoubtedly, from such unusual darkness they thought the whole order of the world to be overfet, and had reason to apprehend its dissolution was at hand.

† It was usual for the lowest slaves to be employed in the drudgery of the mill; and therefore the prophet Isaiah uses this idea, to express the abject state of slavery to which Babylon should be reduced: *Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon: sit on the ground, take the mill-stones, and grind meal.* Isaiah lvii. 1, 2. Dr. Shaw observes, that most families in those countries still grind their wheat and barley at home, having two portable mill-stones for that purpose; the uppermost whereof is turned round by a small handle of wood, or iron, which is placed in the rim. When this stone is large, or expedition is required, then a second person is called in to assist; and, it is usual for the women alone to be concerned in this employment, who seat them-

and, with great austerity, told him, if he ever appeared before him again, it should cost him his life.

Moses promised Pharaoh he should never again see his face; but, by the Divine command, he once more visited him, and that with a message more severe than any he had yet delivered.

"Tell him (says the Almighty to Moses) in the hearing of his people, Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt. And all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the female-servant that is behind the mill †; and all the first-born of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was never before, nor shall be again. But the children of Israel shall not be the least affected, that ye may know the distinction made by the Lord between you and them. And all thy servants shall come down unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee; and after that I will go out myself."

Moses delivered this message to Pharaoh in the manner he had been commanded. But the haughty tyrant defied his threats, and still persisted in his obstinacy, that the Israelites should not depart from Egypt; upon which Moses, finding him inflexible, turned away, and left him.

Previous to the carrying of this last sentence into execution, the Almighty instructed Moses and Aaron in what manner to direct the people to prepare the Passover, which was to be a feast in commemoration of their departure out of Egypt, and was to be held on the day preceeding that event ‡. The directions which, by the Divine command, Moses gave to the people on this occasion, were to the following effect. That every family of Israel, (or, if the family was too small two neighbouring families joining together) should, on the tenth § day of the month, take a lamb

selves over against each other, with the mill-stones between them. We may see not only the propriety of the expression in this verse, of sitting *behind the mill*, but the force of another, Matt. xxiv. 41. *that two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*

‡ These directions given by the Almighty to Moses are introduced by the following passage: *This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first day of the first month of the year to you.* The Jews, like most other nations, began their year, before this event, about the autumnal equinox, in the month Tifri, after their harvest and vintage: but that which was their first month, now became their seventh; as the month of Abib, which answers principally to our March, was, by God's appointment, and in commemoration of this their deliverance, constituted the first month of their sacred year. Abib signifies *the green corn*; and the month was so named, because, about this time, the corn in those countries began to ripen.

§ The passover, or feast was to be celebrated on the fourteenth day of the month, so that four days were allowed previous to its being held. In after-times the Jews did not begin their preparation till the thirteenth, or the day preceeding the passover: but here, they are ordered to prepare on the tenth day of the month, not only because this being the first time of the celebration of the passover, they might require more time to prepare for a ceremony entirely new, but because, being to depart from Egypt suddenly, and in great haste, they might be perfectly ready, and have no hindrance to make them neglect any part of the duty enjoined.

lamb, or kid, and, having shut it up till the fourteenth day, then kill it. That the lamb, or kid, should be a male not above a year old, and without any manner of blemish: that when they killed it, they should catch the blood in a vessel, and with a bunch of hyssop dipped in it, sprinkle the side posts of the outer door after which they should not stir out of the house till the next morning. In the mean time they were to eat the lamb or kid (dressed whole and without breaking a bone of it) neither raw, nor sodden, but roasted, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs; that, if there was more than they could dispense with, they were to bury it; and, lastly, that the posture in which they were to eat it, was to be in a hurry, with their cloathes || on their shoulders, and their staves in their hands, as if they were just upon the point of going to depart.

These preparations being punctually obeyed by the Israelites, agreeable to the Divine command, the last dreadful calamity denounced against Pharaoh and his people was put in execution. In the middle of the night of the fourteenth day of the month, when the Egyptians were all retired to rest, the Almighty, by his destroying angel, slew the first-born of every house in Egypt, from the king who sat on the throne, to the meanest slave; but among the Israelites none was hurt, because the bloody marks upon the door posts were tokens for the angels not to strike on those houses. A sudden outcry and confusion suddenly took place among the Egyptians: the dying groans of their children awoke them; and when each family found, without exception, the first-born both of man and beast were dead, they were deeply affected, expecting that the like fate would soon attend themselves. Pharaoh had the like apprehensions, and, hoping to avoid an untimely death, hastily sent for Moses and Aaron, commanding them, together with all the Israelites, to depart with the utmost expedition "Get you forth, says he, from among my people, both you and the children of Israel, and go serve your God, as ye have said; and take your flocks and your herds as ye demanded, and be gone: I will stand no longer on terms with you, only pray for me that this plague may not go any farther." The people were no less importunate for the departure of the Israelites than their king, concluding, that if they were any longer detained, it would be productive of the most fatal consequences, and that the people of the whole country would be totally destroyed.

Moses had before-hand, according to God's order, directed the Israelites to borrow of the Egyptians all the silver and gold vessels they could; and at the same time God so disposed the hearts of the Egyptians that they lent them every thing they asked for, by which means they were divested of a considerable part of their most valuable property. So fearful were they that some heavy judgment would fall on them should the Israelites be any longer detained, and so urgent

were they to have them gone, that they would not let them stay even to bake their bread, but obliged them to take the dough, raw as it was, along with them, and bake it as well as they could upon the road: from whence it afterwards became a law, that, during the time of the Passover, (which was held annually and lasted seven days) no other bread should be eaten but that which was unleavened.

Though the departure of the Israelites was so sudden, and attended indeed with some confusion, yet Moses did not forget to comply with the dying injunction of the patriarch Joseph, namely, that whenever they should leave Egypt they should not fail carrying his bones with them, and depositing them in the sepulchre of his ancestors. Accordingly they took with them the coffin in which his body had been laid and carefully preserved, and in which it had lain embalmed upwards of an hundred and fifty years.

The Israelites left Egypt on the fifteenth day of the first month, and proceeded as far as Succoth, a distance of about twelve miles. Here they took a review of the whole company, which, exclusive of children, amounted to 600,000. Among them were a great number of strangers, who, having seen the calamities that Egypt had suffered for Israel's sake, chose rather to seek their fortunes with them, than remain any longer in a country that was become, as it were, almost desolate.

To perpetuate the remembrance of this glorious display of Divine power and goodness in behalf of the Israelites, the Almighty (during their stay at Succoth) commanded Moses to inform them, that, when they should be brought into the land of Canaan, they should set apart, and devote unto the Lord, their first-born both of man and beast, as a token that God, for their sakes, had slain all the first-born in Egypt.

The nearest way for the Israelites to have gone from Succoth to Canaan was, through the country of the Philistines; but lest, being unaccustomed to war, they should, in case of any opposition, repent of their deliverance, and return to Egypt, the Almighty directed them, by Moses, to take their rout along the coasts of the Red Sea; and, for their greater encouragement and security, himself undertook to guide and direct them, by the wonderful appearance of a cloud, in the form of a large column, which shaded them from the heat of the sun by day, and in the night-time became a pillar of fire, or a bright cloud, to supply the sun's absence, and illuminate their camp. By this assistance the Israelites were enabled to march both day and night: and, under this auspicious guide, proceeding from Succoth, they came to Etham, (which gives name to the wilderness on whose borders it is situated) and there halted.

Their stay here was very short, for the Almighty, appearing to Moses, ordered him to march them along the coast of the Red Sea, until

|| These cloaths were slight thin garments, resembling those which the Arabs now wear, and which they call *hykes*. "These hykes, says Dr. Shaw, are of various sizes, and of different qualities and fineness. The usual size of them is

six yards long and two broad. It serves them for a complete dress in the day; and, as they sleep in their raiments, as the Israelites did of old (Deut. xxiv. 13.) it serves likewise for their bed and covering at night.

until they came to Pi-hahiroth, which lay between Migdol and the Sea, and there to encamp. At the same time he told Moses, that Pharaoh would say, they were entangled in the wilderness: and that he would harden Pharaoh's heart, that he should pursue them, and be destroyed.

It was not long before this Divine prediction was fully verified. Pharaoh was no sooner informed of the departure of the Israelites, than he repented having given his consent to their dismissal; and rage and revenge succeeded his late fears and grief for the deaths of the first-born. He forgot the Almighty power that, by a succession of plagues, had so lately afflicted him and his people; and, regardless of the danger of provoking him again, blindly pursued his own destruction, instead of that of the Israelites, who, had it not been for the obduracy of his heart, he must have discovered to have been all along under the Divine protection.

Determined, however, to pursue the Israelites, and, if possible, to regain them, Pharaoh mustered up all the forces he could, and for the greater expedition, took with him a prodigious number of chariots and horsemen. Marching at the head of these with all imaginable expedition, on the sixth day after the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt, he came up with them, and halted with his whole army, at a small distance from their camp.

The sight of so considerable an army struck the pusillanimous Israelites with the greatest terror. Finding themselves hemmed in on every side, with the sea in their front, huge mountains on their flank, and the Egyptian army in the rear, they began to despair of any means of escaping. They reproached Moses with being the author of all their woes, and wished to return to the yoke they had so lately shaken off. Long custom had inured them to a state of slavery, and continual servitude of body had debased their minds.

Moses, however, (being apprized of God's design) instead of resenting their reproaches, endeavoured to comfort them, by assuring them that God himself would certainly fight for them, and, by his Almighty power, bring matters to such an issue, that the very people of whom they were so much afraid, should be totally destroyed. "The Lord, said he, will fight for you, and complete your deliverance; and this numerous army of the Egyptians, which now terrifieth you, shall no more affright, or molest you*."

* The words Josephus puts into Moses's mouth, on this occasion are as follow: "Put the case (says he) that you had deposited some great trust in the hands of a person, that had hitherto managed all well and wisely for you, might not you reasonably depend upon that man for the same care and kindness, and the same care too over again? what a madness is it for you to despond then, where God himself has taken you under his protection, and, of his own free bounty, performed every thing by me, that can contribute to your freedom and security? nay, the very difficulty of the case you are in, is an argument to inflame your hope, rather than discourage it. He hath brought you into this distress, on purpose to shew his power and kindness in bringing you out again, even to the surprise and admiration of yourselves, as well as your enemies."

Having thus endeavoured to pacify the intimidated Israelites, Moses ordered them to move towards the sea-side. As they were advancing the miraculous cloud (which the Almighty had appointed for the purpose, and which was under his immediate direction in order to give assistance to his chosen people) removed from the front to the rear of the Israelites camp, and turning its dark side towards the Egyptians threw them into a state of confusion, not being able to form a judgment which way to proceed; while, on the contrary, its bright, or fiery side, being turned to the Israelites, not only gave them a sufficiency of light, but secured them from being, that night, attacked by the enemy.

The Almighty had instructed Moses in what manner to secure his people, and afflict their enemies. The sacred rod, by which he had wrought so many miracles still retained its virtues, and God commanded him again to use it for this his last punishment on Pharaoh and his people. "Lift up thy rod (said he to Moses) and stretch thine hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go on dry land through the midst of the sea: and I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians that they shall pursue them, and there will I get me honour upon the ruin of Pharaoh and his mighty army."

In obedience to this command, as soon as the Israelites came to the brink of the sea, Moses waved his rod; immediately on which a strong east wind blew, and drove the waves back from the land, and, by dividing the waters (which stood, as it were, suspended like a wall on each side) made a dry and safe passage for the Israelites, who, under their great guide, entered the sandy plain, and, in a short time, reached the opposite shore.

The Egyptians, actuated by fury and revenge, pursued the Israelites, and, not suspecting but that they, with their chariots and horsemen, might safely follow the track which the Israelites had before gone on foot, they followed them into the midst of the sea. But about break of day the next morning they began to see their error, by discovering their whole army to be in the greatest state of confusion. Some of their chariots were broken, some fastened in quicksands, and the bodies of others separated from the carriages; so that, perceiving the hand of God against them, they turned about, intending to give over the pursuit, and return. But these efforts proved entirely fruitless. The Israelites were, at this time, all safe on the opposite shore; in

"It is not God's time to interpose with his almighty power in small matters, but in great and trying calamities: when all hopes of human help fails us, that is the season for him to work out the deliverance of those, who cast themselves upon him. And therefore fear nothing, so long as you have him for your protector and defender, who is able to raise the lowly and oppressed, and to lay the honour of their persecutors in the dust. Be not afraid of the Egyptian armed troops, neither despond of your lives and safeties, because you are, at present, locked up between the sea and mountains, and have no visible way in nature to come off; for the God, whom you serve, is able to level all these mountains, and lay the ocean dry. His will, in fine, be done."

in consequence of which Moses, by the Divine command, stretched out his rod again over the sea, whereupon the roaring waves broke loose from their invisible chain, and the divided parts suddenly uniting, covered the thirsty bottom. The frightened Egyptians saw their danger, and with the utmost speed endeavoured to avoid it; but all was in vain: the mighty God of Israel had determined to avenge himself on the infidel monarch and his people, and to make their ruin a lasting monument of his justice and vengeance. The haughty Pharaoh, together with his army, fell victims to an offended God, and not a single person escaped to communicate the direful intelligence to their countrymen.

The Israelites beheld, with wonder and amazement, the carcases, and rich spoils of their enemies, thrown upon the sea-shore; for which they not only expressed their thankfulness to God, but also respect and reverence to his servant Moses, by whose hand the Almighty had wrought so many wonders for their preservation and safety.

In grateful acknowledgment for this wonderful deliverance, Moses composed a triumphant hymn, in which he extolled the greatness of God's power, and his amazing mercy to his people displayed on this occasion. In singing this hymn Moses was joined by the whole company, whom he divided into two great parts or choirs. He and his brother Aaron headed the men, and their sister Miriam, with a timbrel in her hand, was placed at the head of the women. They sang and played alternately, and, in the height of their joy, intermixed dances, which were properly adapted to display that thankfulness of heart expressed in the words they sang †.

As Egypt has been the grand scene of the very important transactions related in this chapter, it may not be improper to close it with a few observations on the learning, language, religion, idolatry, &c. of the Egyptians during this period.

That the Egyptians, in the very early ages of the world, were famous for wisdom and learning

† This hymn, or song of Moses abounds with the most sublime and lofty expressions; and there is no doubt but the sacred music which the women played to it was properly adapted. It is also applied to the true and original end of poetry; namely, the praise of God, and his marvellous doings. The two first verses run thus:

*I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously;
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.
The Lord is my strength and song;
And he is become my salvation:
He is my God; and I will prepare him an habitation:
My father's God; and I will exalt him.*

This hymn runs from the first verse of the fifteenth chapter of Exodus to the twenty-first; and the whole of it may be thus paraphrased:

The Lord's triumphant name let all rehearse,
Praise the Great Maker of the universe!
The horse, whom rich caparisons adorn,
Proud riders by the generous coursers borne,
At once have slept their last and final sleep.
At once lie buried in the Arabian deep.
Great God of war! we will thy works proclaim,
Thy wondrous works! Jehovah is thy name.

is evident from many antient writers, as also the testimony of the scriptures themselves; for when, among other things to the honour of Moses, it is said that *he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians* †; and, to magnify the knowledge of Solomon, we are told that *he excelled all the wisdom of the Egyptians* §; we cannot but infer that this nation had gained a reputation for knowledge superior to any other in the world.

Natural causes, assisted by natural genius, produced the invention of several useful sciences. The tillage of the ground gave rise to the study of astronomy, for, by observing the nature and motions of the planets, they became acquainted with the proper times and seasons for the several parts of agriculture. The overflowing of their country every year by the Nile, and every year losing most of its land-marks, made it of continual use to them to study geometry, and, as a necessary companion to that, to make themselves acquainted with arithmetic, or the art of computation.

But though they had, in some measure, discovered these sciences, yet it is reasonable to imagine that for a considerable time their knowledge of them was very imperfect. They observed, indeed, the places of the stars, and the periodical motions of the planets. They kept accounts of their observations, together with the weather and seasons that followed, for a long course of years. They recorded the time of sowing this or that grain, and, by their long experience, became able prognosticators of the weather, and excellent directors for the tillage of the ground. In like manner, by their knowledge in Geography, they contrived very proper methods of marking out, and describing, the several parts of their country, and, no doubt, were very careful in marking draughts of the flow and ebb of the river Nile every year; but, notwithstanding they had acquired all this knowledge, yet it is very certain that many years elapsed before these sciences were brought to a proper state of perfection.

The science of Physic is generally imputed to Æsculapius, which name was given to one of their kings for his great skill in that art. They likewise

Our Saviour Thou, our strength, our song, our praise,
Our Father's God, thy glorious name we'll raise:
For thee a stately temple we'll prepare,
Deep as the center, tow'ring as the air.

Thus said th' insulting foe—I will pursue,
My sword, my thirsty sword, in blood embue:
The winds of God blew terrible and loud,
The sea the signal takes, and overwhelms the proud.
Like stones, like lead they sink, they all expire
Like stubble in thy wrath's consuming fire.
The waters saw, thy voice the waters hear,
Forget their nature, and congeal with fear.
Convulsions cleave the seas in horrid caves,
And shew a new abyss beneath the waves.

Great God of Israel! what vain idol dare
With Thee th' Eternal Lord of Hosts compare?
Thy glory shall thy ransom'd saints express,
Obedient nature does thy power confess.
And Thee, with faces veil'd, the dazzled angels bless.

† Acts vii. 22.

§ 1 Kings iv. 30.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



*PHARAOH and his Host of Egyptians DROWNED
in the Red Sea.*

likewise invented chymistry; and, no doubt, from their constant practice of dissections, were well acquainted with anatomy.

But, what the Egyptians most valued themselves for, at this period, was, their knowledge in magic, which art had no other foundation than a superstitious belief of the great influence the heavenly bodies are supposed to have on this inferior world. They imagined that the seven planets governed the seven days of the week, and pretended that, by a long observation of the celestial bodies they had obtained the art of foreseeing future events. They believed that, generally speaking, prodigies were caused, oracles given, and visions occasioned, in a natural way, either by the observations on the planets, or by the operations of the power of nature; and therefore they conceived that their learned professors could work miracles, obtain omens, and interpret dreams merely by their skill in natural knowledge.

These were some of the chief arts and sciences that flourished at this time among the Egyptians; and the following were the means by which this learning was preserved and transmitted to their descendants.

That the Egyptian language was one of the most ancient in the world is not to be doubted: it was certainly an original, or mother-tongue, and formed immediately after the Confusion of Tongues at Babel. Their most ancient method of writing was, by hieroglyphic figures of various animals and plants, the different parts of human bodies, and mechanical instruments. In these things did the hieroglyphicks both of the Ethiopians and Egyptians (whereof Hermes is said to have been the inventor) most certainly consist. But, exclusive of these, they made use likewise of literal characters, whereof they had two kinds: one of these they called the *sacred letters*, in which their public registers, and other matters of importance, were written; and the other, the *vulgar*, from its being used in the common course of business. But both these characters are at present lost, unless they remain in some old *Inscriptions*, that are unintelligible, and cannot be decypher'd.

Not only the Egyptians, but several other Nations, used to preserve the Memory of Things by *Inscriptions* on Pillars. The *Column of Hermes*, upon which he is said to have wrote all his learning, are mentioned by several writers of good note; and from them, both the Grecian Philosophers, and Egyptian Historians are supposed to have taken many valuable hints: But to these *Inscriptions* succeeded the *sacred Books*, which contained not only what related to the Worship of the Gods, and the Laws of the Kingdom; but *historical* Collections likewise, and all kind of *miscellaneous* and *philosophical* matters of any moment, which the Priests, or *sacred Scribes* were obliged to insert in these publick *Registers*, in order to be transmitted to posterity.

With respect to the religion of the Egyptians, it consisted of the most gross idolatry, and the deities they worshipped were of the most absurd and fabulous nature. Those chiefly honoured were, Osiris and Isis, by which it is most probable they originally meant the sun and moon,

whose influences governed and preserved the world. The name Osiris in the Egyptian tongue, signified *many-eyed*, an epithet very proper for the sun; and Isis signified *antient*. These two planets were considered by them as the great causes of nutrition and generation, and as it were the sources from whence the other parts of nature, which also they looked upon as gods, and to which they gave distinct names, were derived. These were Jupiter, or Spirit, the *vis vivifica* of living creatures; Vulcan, or Fire; Ceres, or the Earth; Oceanus (by which they meant their Nile) or Moisture; and Neith (Minerva) or Air. They had also terrestrial and mortal deities, which had, they thought, merited the honours paid them by the benefits they conferred on man in their life-time, several of them having been good kings of Egypt. Some of these bore the same names with the celestial gods, and others had proper names of their own. Such were the Sun, Cronus, or Saturn, Rhea, Jupiter, (called by them Ammon) Juno, Vesta, Hermes or Mercury, Orus, Venus, Pan, Arueris, Nephthys, Harpocrates, and others.

Besides these gods, the Egyptians worshipped a great number of beasts; as, the ox, the dog, the wolf, the hawk, the crocodile, the ibis, the cat, &c. Many of these animals were the objects only of the superstition of some particular cities: and whilst the inhabitants of one part worshipped a particular species of them as gods, their neighbours held them in the greatest detestation, which often occasioned bitter animosities, and sometimes the most inveterate quarrels.

The inhabitants of every city had a peculiar zeal for their gods. "Among us, says Cicero, it is very common to see temples robbed and statues carried off; but it was never known that any person in Egypt ever abused a crocodile, an ibis, or a cat, for its inhabitants would have suffered the most extreme torments, rather than have been guilty of such sacrilege." It was death for any person to kill one of these animals intentionally; and even a punishment was decreed against him who should have killed one of them tho' by accident. Diodorus Siculus relates an incident to which he was eye-witness during his stay in Egypt, "A Roman, says he, had inadvertently, and without design, killed a cat; the exasperated populace ran to his house; and neither the authority of the king, who immediately detached a body of his guards, nor the terror of the Roman name, could rescue the unfortunate criminal. And such was the reverence the Egyptians had for these animals, that in an extreme famine, they chose rather to eat one another, than feed upon these imaginary deities."

But of all the animals which the Egyptians held sacred, that most revered was the bull. There were two of this kind kept, the one at Memphis, called Apis, and the other at Heliopolis, called Minevis. This last was black, and the honours paid to him were inferior to those due to Apis.

The extravagant worship which the Egyptians paid to the bull at Memphis and Heliopolis, the goat at Mendes, the lion at Leontopolis, and the crocodile at the lake Mæris, almost exceeds belief. They were kept in consecrated enclosures,

and well attended by men of high rank, who at a great expence provided victuals for them, which consisted of the finest grafs, corn, flour boiled in milk, cakes of several sorts made with honey, and other dainties. Those that fed on raw meat were supplied with several sorts of birds. They were washed in hot baths, anointed with the most precious ointments, and perfumed with the most odoriferous scents. They lay on the richest carpets and other costly furniture; and that they might want nothing to make their lives as happy as possible, they had the most beautiful females of their several kinds provided for them, to which they gave the title of concubines.

The crocodile, to whom they paid adoration, was trained up to be tame and familiar for the purpose; he had his ears adorned with strings of jewels and gold, and his fore-feet were ornamented with golden chains. He was fed with consecrated provisions at the public charge, and when strangers went to see him, which often happened out of curiosity, they also carried presents of cake, dressed meat, and wine, or a drink made with honey, which was offered him by the priests, one opening his mouth, and the other feeding him. When he died, his body was embalmed and buried in a coffin at Arsinoe.

On the death of any of these animals, the Egyptians lamented their loss as if they had been their children, and frequently laid out considerable sums in their interment. If a cat died, all the family shaved their eye-brows, and if a dog, their whole body. And thus, putting themselves in mourning, they wrapped the dead animal in fine linen, and carried it to be embalmed, where, being anointed with oil of cedar, and other aromatic preparations to keep it from putrefaction, it was buried with the greatest solemnity.

Such were the absurd and idolatrous practices of the Egyptians, on whom, and on this account, the following observation was certainly made by the apostle; namely, that *though they knew God, yet they glorified him not as God; but changed the glory of God into the image of four-footed beasts, and his truth into a lie; and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.* Rom. i. 21, 23, 25.

We must not leave Egypt without taking some notice of those monumental structures called Pyramids, which have attracted the attention of travellers in all ages, and which having been erected in the period we are now upon, were probably the labours of the distressed Israelites during their captivity under the Egyptian monarchs.

These pyramids have been justly esteemed the most curious structures in the world, and notwithstanding their great antiquity, yet three of them still remain in a perfect state. They are situated at a small distance from each other on the spot where once stood the city of Memphis. Two of these are shut up, but the third stands for public inspection; and being the largest of the whole (of which there were not less than twenty in different parts) we shall here give a particular description of it; by which a proper idea may be formed of the construction of the rest.

This pyramid is situated on a rocky hill,

(which, in a gentle and easy ascent, rises 100 feet) in the sandy desert of Lybia, about a quarter of a mile from the plains of Egypt. Its basis is generally supposed to be an exact square, and every side (according to those who have been as careful as possible in its mensuration) about 693 English feet. Its altitude, if measured by its perpendicular, is 481 feet, but, if taken according to the inclination of the pyramid, as it ascends, it is exactly equal to a side of its basis.

The ascent to the top of this pyramid is by steps on the outside, the whole number of which are said to be 212. These steps are formed in rows, and differ as well in height as breadth: those of the lowermost row are near three feet high and two broad, which running about the pyramid in a level, form a narrow walk; the second is like the first, benching in near three feet; the third is also much the same; and the rest follow in order like so many stairs, rising one above another to the top, which does not end in a point like mathematical pyramids, but in a small flat or square about twelve feet broad.

The entrance into the pyramid is by a square narrow passage, which opens in the midst of the north side on the sixteenth step, or ascending thirty-eight feet, on an artificial bank of earth. The stone over it is near 12 feet long and above eight feet wide. This entry goes declining with an angle of twenty-six degrees, being thirty-six feet and a half broad, and ninety-two feet and a half long. The structure of it was the design of an exquisite hand, as appears by the smoothness and evenness of the work, and close knitting of the joints. On the right hand is a hole of eighty-nine feet long; and a gallery on the left paved with smooth polished marble. Another passage runs in a level 110 feet, and leads to an arched vault or chamber twenty feet long, seventeen broad, and fifteen high. The second gallery is divided from the first by a wall, and is a very stately piece of work, not inferior, either in artificial beauty or richness of materials, to the most sumptuous and magnificent buildings: it is 154 feet long, seven broad, and twenty-six high. The stone of which the gallery is built is a white and polished marble, very regularly cut in large tables; and the joints so close, that they are scarce discernable by a curious eye. It is here to be observed, that those who would view the inside must carry lights with them, for there is no window, or other opening, in this pyramid, to admit the light.

After passing the second gallery, you come to two small anti-chambers lined with a rich speckled kind of Thebaic marble. Beyond is a square hole, over which are five lines cut parallel and perpendicular; besides which no other sculptures or engravings are observed in the whole pyramid. This passage is nine feet long, most exquisitely cut of Thebaic marble, and is a landing-place at the north end of a very sumptuous and well proportioned room. This magnificent and spacious chamber, in which art seems to have contended with nature, stands in the center of the pyramid, equidistant from all the sides, and almost in the midst between the basis and the top. The floor, the sides, and the roof, are all made of large tables of the most beautiful marble. From the top of it to the bottom there are about six ranges

ranges of stone, all of which are fixed to an equal height, and very gracefully placed round the room in one attitude. The stones that cover this chamber are of a prodigious length, like so many huge beams, lying flat and traversing the room, supporting that infinite mass and weight of the pyramid above. The chamber is thirty-four feet long, seventeen broad, and nineteen and an half high. Whatever was originally in this room, at present nothing remains but a tomb of granite marble, of one piece, hollow within, uncovered at the top, and founding like a bell. The figure of the tomb is like an altar, or two cubes finely set together, cut smooth and plain, about seven feet long, four broad, and four deep. It formerly had a cover, which has been broke; and it is supposed to have been raised and placed there before the roof of the chamber was closed.

Pliny tells us, this famous pyramid took twenty years in building, and that during the time 37000 men were kept constantly at work. It is supposed to have been built as a sepulchre for one of their kings who was never buried in it; and the general opinion is, that it was the same Pharaoh, who, with his whole army, was drowned in the Red-Sea, as a just judgment on him for his having so barbarously persecuted the Israelites.

A building of the like date, and not of inferior grandeur, was the Labyrinth, which stood in the Heracleotick Nome, or Province, near the city Arsinoe, and not far from the Lake Mæris. The design of this structure seems to have been both for a pantheon, or universal temple of all the gods, that were worshipped in the several places of Egypt; and also for a general convention-house, for the states of the whole nation to meet, and enact laws and determine causes of great importance: and therefore it is said by some to have been built at the common charge of the twelve kings, who, in those days, reigned all at once in Egypt, as a monument of their magnificence, and a place for their interment.

We are told by Herodotus, that each province, or Nome, had, in this building, a distinct hall, where its principal magistrates used to meet; that these halls were vaulted, surrounded with pillars of white stone finely polished, and had an equal number of doors, opposite to one another, six opening to the north, and six to the south, all encompassed by the same wall; that there were three thousand chambers in this edifice, fifteen hundred in the upper part, and as many under ground; and that he viewed every room in the upper part, but was not permitted by those, who kept the palace, to go into the subterraneous part, because the sepulchres of the holy crocodiles, and of the kings, who built the labyrinth, were there. What he saw there, as he reports, seemed to surpass the art of man: so many ways out, by various passages, and infinite returns, afforded a thousand occasions of wonder, as he passed from a spacious hall to a chamber, from thence to a private closet, then again into other passages out of the closet, and, out of the chambers, into more spacious rooms; where all the walls and roofs were not only encrusted with marble, but richly adorned likewise with figures of sculpture.

To this account given by Herodotus, other

ancient writers add, that this edifice stood in the midst of an immense square, surrounded with buildings at a great distance; that the porch was of Parian marble, and all the other pillars of the marble of Syene; that within it were the temples of the several deities, and galleries, to which one ascended by 90 steps, adorned with many columns of porphyry, images of their gods, and statues of their kings, of a monstrous size; that the whole edifice consisted of stone, the floors were laid with vast tables, and the roof looked like one continued field of stone; that the passages met and crossed one another, with so much intricacy, that it was impossible for a stranger to find his way, either in or out, without a guide; and that several of the apartments were so contrived, that, upon opening the doors, there was heard within a terrible noise resembling thunder.

Notwithstanding the great length of time since this amazing structure was erected, there are yet such remains left, that some idea may be formed of its original splendor and magnificence. The part that is still to be seen is thus described by Mr. Lucas in his voyages: "The first thing, says he, you see is a large portico of marble, facing the rising-sun, and sustained by four great marble pillars, but composed of several pieces. Three of these pillars are still standing, but one of the middle ones is half fallen. In the middle is a door, whose sides and entablature are very massy; and above is a frieze, whereon is represented an head with wings, stretched out along the frieze, and several hieroglyphics underneath.

—Passing through this portico, you enter into a fine large hall, above 40 feet high, all of marble. The roof consists of twelve tables of marble, exquisitely joined, each 25 feet long, and three broad, which cross the room from one end to the other; and, as the room is not arched, but flat, you cannot but be struck with admiration at the boldness of its architecture, since it is scarce conceivable, how it could continue, so many ages, in a position so improper to support so prodigious a weight. At the end of this hall, over-against the first door, there is a second portico, with the same ornaments as the first, but less, by which you enter into a second hall, not so big as the first, but covered with eight stones. At the end of this room, straight forwards, there is a third portico, still less than the second, as well as the hall, into which it leads, though it has sixteen stones to roof it; and, at the end of this third hall, there is a fourth portico set against the wall, and placed there for symmetry only, and to answer the rest. The length of these three halls is the whole depth of the building, in its present condition. It was on the two sides, and especially under ground, that the prodigious number of rooms and avenues, mentioned by the ancients, were built.—What is now remaining of it seems to be no more than a fourth part of the inner edifice, which, in all probability, had four fronts, and twelve halls, answering to them: The rest are decayed by time, or demolished by design, as appears from the prodigious ruins, which are to be seen all around it."

Another curiosity yet to be mentioned, which still stands firm and entire, though supposed to be the work of this early period, is the well of the

the patriarch Joseph. It is entirely hewn out of a rock, in a kind of an oval, or oblong form, being eighteen feet wide, twenty-four long, and, in the whole, two hundred and seventy-six deep.

The whole depth of the well is properly divided into two parts, which may be distinguished by the names of the Upper and Lower Well. To each of these is a wheel, which being turned by two oxen in each place, draws up the water by a long chain, to which are fastened several leather vessels, that fill and empty themselves, alternately, as the wheel goes round.

The passage to the second well (as it may be called) which is but fifteen feet deep, and nine wide, is by a stair-case of such easy descent, that some say the oxen which draw up the water are, every day, drove down and up it; though others say, they are let down and drawn up on a platform. However this be, it is certain the stair-case turns twelve times round the well, for which reason the Arabs call it *the Well of the winding stair-case*. Of these turnings six have eighteen steps each, and the other six nineteen, which, in the whole, make 222 steps. As a security from falling, in going down, you have, on the left hand, the main rock, and on the right, some of the same rock left, which serves both as a wall to the well on the inside, and on the other side as a wall to the stair-case, which, at convenient distances, has windows cut in it that convey the light down from the mouth of the well.

When you go down to the lower well (which has likewise a stair-case, but neither so wide, nor so deep as the other, and no parapet on the side of the well, which makes the descent dangerous) it is here that you see the oxen at work, turning the wheel and drawing the water from a spring at the bottom, about eight or nine feet deep, which water passing through a pipe into a large cistern, is from thence drawn up again by two other oxen, which turn the wheel above; and so, from a reservoir at the top of the well, the water is conveyed into all the apartments of the castle of Grand Cairo, which as Thevenot tells us, both for strength and beauty, is one of the finest palaces he ever saw; a work not unworthy the ancient Pharaohs and Ptolemies, who built it, and little short in point of beauty, to the pomp and magnificence of the pyramids.

Besides this structure, there are some others which the present inhabitants ascribe to the patriarch Joseph. But as there is little or no probability, that any of them came under the period we are now upon, we must refer such of our readers as may be inclined to gratify their curiosity with respect to these and other matters, to the more modern authors, who have treated on the subject*. It is sufficient for us, that we have mentioned those particulars which are immediately connected with our undertaking. This we have done as far as is necessary, and shall therefore quit our digression, close this chapter, and, in the next, resume our history.

C H A P. IX.

The Israelites are distressed for water in the wilderness of Shur, but miraculously relieved by Moses. Manna sent to them from heaven. God's directions concerning the use of it. Are again distressed for water, and miraculously supplied. Engage an army of the Amalekites and totally defeat them. Moses is visited by Jethro, his father-in-law. God pronounces the ten commandments to the people from Mount Sinai. Gives them other precepts, and makes a covenant with them. Moses erects an altar to God. Goes up to Mount Sinai, and there continues forty days and nights. Receives instructions from God concerning the Tabernacle. Also the Tables of stone, on which are inscribed the words of the law. The people during the absence of Moses, practise idolatry, for which they are severely punished. God converses with Moses, whose face shines with uncommon lustre. Building of the Tabernacle. God directs Moses in what manner the people shall perform religious worship. Aaron and his sons appointed to the priestly office. Terrible judgment inflicted on Nadab and Abihu, two of the sons of Aaron. A blasphemer stoned to death.

THE Israelites, having acknowledged their thankfulness to God for his beneficent protection in delivering them out of Egyptian bondage, Moses conducted them from the Red Sea into the desert of Shur or Etham. Here they travelled three days without finding any water, which, to so great a number of people, and in so hot a country, must have been very afflicting.

At length, they came to a place called Marah, where they found some water; but, on tasting it, they could not drink it, on account of its being so exceeding bitter. This disappointment inflamed their thirst, and increased their dissatisfaction, insomuch that they began to murmur against Moses, asking him what they should drink? Moses was sensible of the calamity under

* As Egypt is one of the most antient places in the universe, and abounds with curiosities peculiar to itself, we would recommend to such of our readers as may be desirous of becoming properly acquainted with its antient and present state, a most inimitable performance lately published, intitled, "A New and Complete System of Geography, containing a full, accurate, authentic, and interesting Account and Description of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America; as

"divided into Empires, Kingdoms, States and Republics. Embellished with a great number of curious Copper Plates, consisting of Views, Maps, Land and water Perspectives, Birds, Beasts, Fishes, &c. Also the various Dresses of the Inhabitants of the different Countries, with their strange Ceremonies, Customs, Amusements, &c. By Charles Theodore Middleton, Esq. Printed for J. Cooke, No. 17, Pater-noster-Row."

under which they laboured; and, fearful lest they should, by their future murmurings, provoke the Almighty to punish them, he addressed himself to God in their behalf, who no sooner heard the complaint, than he was pleased to remove it. He ordered Moses to make use of the wood of a certain tree, which, as soon as it was thrown into the water, changed its offensive quality and became sweet.

From Marah the Israelites proceeded to Elim, where they found not only plenty of water, but also great numbers of palm, or date-trees, the fruit of which being ripe supplied them with food. Here it may be supposed they made some stay; for when they left the place it was the fifteenth day of the second month, which was just a month from the day of their departure from Egypt.

On their removal from Elim they proceeded to the wilderness of Sin*, situated between Elim and Mount Sinai. Here again they fell into a general murmur against Moses and Aaron, on account of the barrenness of the place, and the scarcity of provisions. "Would to God (cried they) we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, where we had plenty of bread and meat; for now ye have brought us into this desert, where we must perish with famine."

The Almighty, to convince these murmuring people of his Divine power and protection, was pleased to inform them, by the mouth of Moses, that he would take care to supply them with food from heaven, and it was not long before his beneficent promise was fulfilled. On that very Evening he caused such a number of quails† to fall among them, as almost covered their camp, by which they were plentifully supplied with the article of flesh. The next morning, as soon as the dew was gone, they found the surface of the earth covered with little white round things, resembling, in shape, the coriander seed. The Israelites, astonished at so singular a circumstance, said one to another, what is this? upon which Moses answered, *It is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.* And from thence they gave it the name of *Manna*.

As this was the bread designed by the Almighty for the Israelites during their stay in the wilderness, and as they were strangers to its qualities, he was pleased to give them the fol-

lowing directions in what manner they were to manage it for the intended purposes.

That it was to be gathered by measure, an Omer for every head, according to the number of each family; but this direction some persons slighting, and gathering above the portion allowed, found their quantity miraculously lessened, while the more moderate had theirs increased.

That it was to be gathered fresh every morning, all of which should be consumed the same day.—This precept was likewise not observed by some, who, keeping a part till the next morning, found, upon examination, that it stunk, and was so putrified as to be totally useless.

That, on the seventh day (which was the sabbath) there could not be any found; and therefore, on the sixth, they should gather a double portion, which being laid up against the ensuing day, should be perfectly sweet and wholesome.

Such were the directions given by God to the Israelites for the use of this miraculous bread, on which they were chiefly supported for forty years. And in order to perpetuate the remembrance of it, and that their posterity might see on what God had fed them while in the wilderness, he appointed an Omer of it to be put into a pot, and to be carefully preserved for that purpose.

Thus did the Almighty supply the wants of the discontented Israelites in the most ample manner; and farther to convince them of his peculiar favour and regard, directed their marches from place to place, and appointed their respective encampments.

Leaving the desert of Sin, and proceeding on their journey, they came to a place called Rephidim, where they struck their tents and encamped. Here they were again distressed for water, upon which they fell into their old way of distrusting God's providence, and murmuring against Moses; but on this occasion they were much more mutinous and desperate than ever. It was in vain for Moses to endeavour to persuade them to be patient, and wait the will of God: this only inflamed them the more, and at length their rage arose to such a height, that they threatened to stone him.

Moses, not knowing what to do in order to appease the rage of the people, addressed himself to God, who was pleased to dissipate his fear,

* Dr. Shaw, in his travels, speaking of these places, says, "We have a distinct view of mount Sinai from Elim; the wilderness, as it is called, of Sin, lying betwixt them. All the way we traversed these plains we were agreeably diverted with the sight of a variety of lizards and vipers, which are here in great numbers. We were afterwards near twelve hours in passing the many windings and difficult ways, which lie betwixt these deserts and those of Sinai. The latter consists of a beautiful plain, more than a league in breadth, and nearly three in length, lying open towards the north-east, where we entered it; but is closed up to the southward, by some of the lower eminences of mount Sinai. In this direction, likewise, the higher parts of this mountain make such encroachments upon the plain, that they divide it into two, each of them capacious enough to have received the whole encampment of the Israelites. That which lies to the eastward, may be the desert of Sinai, properly so called, where Moses saw the angel of the Lord in the burning bush, when he was guarding the flocks of Jethro. Exod. iii. 2. The convent of St. Catharine is built over the place of this

Divine appearance. It is near three hundred feet square, and more than forty in height, being built partly of stone, and partly with mud and mortar mixed together. The more immediate place of the *Shechinah* is honoured with a little chapel, which the old fraternity of St. Basil has in such esteem and veneration, that, in imitation of Moses, they put off their shoes from off their feet, whenever they enter it."

† The word, which we render Quail, according to the confession of the Jews themselves, is of an uncertain signification, and may denote a locust as well as a quail. But that these were birds, and not insects, appears from the following passage of the psalmist: *God rained flesh upon them as thick as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea.* Psal. lxxviii. 27. It is to be observed that this was done at that time of the year when these birds are known to fly from Egypt across the Red Sea in prodigious quantities; so that this miracle did not so much consist in the prodigious number of the birds, as in God's directing them to the camp of the Israelites, and on that very evening too when he had promised them food.

fear, by promising to signalize that place by a miraculous supply of water, as he had lately done another by a miraculous supply of food. Go, said he, *on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel: and thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand and go. Behold I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, and the people shall drink.* Moses did as he was commanded, and no sooner had he smitten the rock with his rod, than water in abundance gushed out from several places at the same time, which joining in one common stream ran down to the camp at Rephidim, by which the people were immediately supplied, and their thirst being quenched, their rage against Moses instantly ceased †. This station, however, on account of the infamous mutiny of the people, and their distrust of God, Moses (as a caution and remembrance to them in future) called Massah and Meribah, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *temptation* and *contention*.

A short time after this singular circumstance happened, and while the Israelites were yet encamped at Rephidim, they were one day suddenly alarmed at the approach of an army of the Amalekites. Moses reflecting a little on this unexpected circumstance, ordered Joshua § (a valiant young man who was always about him) to draw out a party of the choicest men in the camp, and, early the next morning, to give the enemy battle.

Joshua obeyed the command of Moses, who, the next morning, accompanied by Aaron and Hur, went to the top of an eminence, from whence they might have a view of the engagement. Moses took with him his rod, and while he held it up during the battle, the Israelites prevailed; but when, through weariness, his hand began to drop, the Amalekites had the better. Aaron and Hur, observing this, took a stone, on which they sat Moses, and, placing themselves on each side, supported his hands, in one of which was the rod, and the other uplifted to God. This they continued to do till the going down of the sun, in which time the Amalekites were routed, and every man put to the sword.

† The rock from whence this water flowed in so miraculous a manner is particularly noticed by Dr. Shaw, who says, "After we had descended, with no small difficulty, down the other or western side of mount Sinai, we came into the plain, or wilderness of Rephidim, where we saw that extraordinary antiquity, the Rock of Meribah, which has continued down to this day, without the least injury from time or accidents. This is rightly called, from its hardness, Deut. viii. 15. a *rock of flint*; though, from the purple, or reddish colour of it, it may be rather rendered, *the rock of amethyst*, or *the amethystine*, or *granate rock*. It is about six yards square, lying tottering, as it were, and loose, near the middle of the valley; and seems to have been formerly a part, or cliff of mount Sinai, which hangs, in a variety of precipices, all over this plain. The waters which gushed out, and the streams which flowed withal, Psal. lxxviii. 21. have hollowed, a-cross one corner of this rock, a channel about two inches deep, and twenty wide, all over incrustrated, like the inside of a tea-kettle which has been long used: besides several mossy productions, which are still preserved by the dew, we see all over this channel a great number of holes, some of them four or five inches deep, and one or two in diameter; the lively and demonstrative tokens of their having been formerly so many fountains. Neither

This distinguished success, in their first martial enterprise, gave great encouragement to the Israelites; and that so remarkable an action might be transmitted to posterity, God commanded Moses to record it in a book, that Joshua, the general, might thereby be animated to future services; for, said he, *I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven* ||. As a memorial of this victory Moses erected an altar on the spot, and offered sacrifice to the Lord. The name he gave it was *JEHOVAH-Nissi*, which signifies *the Lord is my banner*.

Soon after the defeat of the Amalekites, Moses left Rephidim, and proceeded, with all his people, towards Mount Sinai, where God at first appeared to him in the Burning Bush, and not far from whence dwelt Jethro, his father-in-law.

Jethro having heard of all that God had done for Moses and his people, and understanding they were now near him, he took his daughter Zipporah (Moses's wife) with their two sons, Gershom and Eliezer, and went to the Israelites camp; where, after mutual salutations and embraces, Moses entertained his father-in-law with a particular account of every thing that had happened to him during his absence. In return, Jethro, offered up solemn praises to God, and joined with Moses, and the rest of the elders of Israel, in sacrifices, and such other rejoicings, as were thought proper on the occasion.

During Jethro's stay in the camp, he took notice of the great weight of business under which Moses laboured, in hearing the complaints, and determining the differences of so great a body of people: and therefore, being a wise and experienced man himself, he advised his son-in-law to appoint certain subordinate officers, properly qualified, men of sincerity and abilities, such as feared God, and hated covetousness, to be rulers; some over thousands, some over hundreds, some over fifties, and some over tens, who should hear and determine all trifling disputes among the people, and refer the greater and more weighty causes only to him; assuring him, that, if, with God's approbation, he followed this advice, it would prove advantageous both to him and the people.

Moses, highly approving of this salutary advice

could art or chance be concerned in the contrivance; inasmuch as every circumstance points out to us a miracle; and, in the same manner with the rent in the rock of mount Calvary at Jerusalem, never fails to produce the greatest seriousness and devotion in all who see it. The Arabs, who were our guard, were ready to stone me, for attempting to break off a corner of it."

§ This is the first mention made of Joshua, who makes so distinguished a figure in the subsequent part of the sacred history; in which he is frequently styled *the servant of Moses*.

|| The Amalekites were a people descended from Amalek, the son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, by a concubine. The ground of their enmity against the Israelites is generally supposed to have been an innate hatred, from the remembrance of Jacob's depriving their progenitor both of his birth-right and blessing. The most probable reason to be given why God thought proper to pronounce a perpetual war against them is this—That, knowing the Israelites were pre-ordained by the Almighty to be put in possession of the land of Canaan, they came against them with an armed force, in hopes of frustrating the designs of Providence. The injury done to the Israelites was not so much as the affront offered to the Divine majesty, and therefore God threatens utterly to extirpate the designers of it.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



EXODUS XVII. 8, &c.

The AMALEKITES defeated by JOSHUA.

advice from his father-in-law, immediately put it in practice, soon after which Jethro took his leave, and returned to his own habitation.

It was three months after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, when they encamped in the wilderness of Sinai, near the mount of God. They had not been long here before the Almighty summoned Moses to come up to him on the mount. Moses readily obeying the Divine command, the Almighty charged him to remind the Israelites of the many wonders he had wrought in their favour; and to assure them that, (notwithstanding their frequent murmurings and distrust of his Providence) if, for the future, they would become obedient to his laws, he would still look upon them as his peculiar people, a favourite nation, and a royal priesthood.

Moses having communicated this gracious message from the Almighty to the elders, and they to the people, they unanimously answered, That whatsoever the Lord had commanded, or should afterwards command, they would strictly and obediently perform.

With this answer Moses ascended the Mount, and after making it known to the Almighty, he commanded him to direct the people to cleanse and purify themselves two days, for that, on the third, he should come down upon the mountain, and make a covenant with them. He likewise gave him a strict charge to set boundaries about the foot of the mount, which none should attempt to pass under the severest penalties.

These orders were strictly obeyed, and every preparation made conformable to the Divine injunctions. On the third day, early in the morning, the people saw the mountain surrounded with a thick cloud, out of which proceeded such dreadful peals of thunder and flashes of lightning, as filled them with horror and amazement.

The first sounding of the trumpet was the signal for the people to approach the mountain; upon which, as soon as it began, Moses brought them out of the camp, and conducted them as near to the mount as the barrier would permit. Here they beheld an alarming sight indeed: the whole surface of the mount was covered with fire and smoak, while the foundation of it seemed to tremble and shake under them. In the midst of this dreadful scene the trumpet was heard to sound louder and louder, and the claps of thunder and flashes of fire were more frequent and violent. At length, on a sudden, the most solemn silence took place; and, after a short pause the Almighty was heard (from the midst of the fire and smoak which yet continued) to pronounce the Law of the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments †, which is indeed, a compleat system of the moral part of the Jewish Institutes, and in few, but very significant words, comprehends the duty of mankind to God, themselves and their neighbour.

When the Divine voice ceased, the people,

astonished at what they saw and heard, removed farther from the camp; and, in the height of their fear and surprize, addressed themselves to Moses, beseeching him, that, for the future, he would speak to them in God's stead, and whatever he enjoined they would obey, because, were they again to hear the dreadful voice of God, they should certainly die with horror and astonishment.

Moses was far from being displeased at this request, as it evinced the reverence and respect they entertained, first, to the Divine Being, and next to himself. To ease their minds from the great terror they had felt, he assured them, that all this wonderful scene was not exhibited to them with a design to create in them any slavish fear, but a filial confidence and submission to such laws as the Divine Wisdom should hereafter think fit to enjoin.

Having said this to the people, Moses again ascended the mountain, where (in addition to the Decalogue) he received from God several other laws, both ceremonial and political; the whole of which were calculated with a wise design to preserve the people in their obedience to God; to prevent their intermixture with other nations, and to advance the welfare of their commonwealth, by securing to all the members of it a quiet enjoyment of their lives and properties †.

When Moses had received these additional laws, he returned from the Mount, and immediately erected an altar to God, on which he offered up burnt and peace offerings. Having written down the last laws delivered to him by God, he caused them to be read to all the people, and exacted a solemn promise from them, that they would keep them faithfully. He then confirmed the covenant, by sprinkling the altar, the book, and the people, with the blood of the victims slaughtered on the occasion; and to perpetuate the remembrance of this alliance between God and his people, he ordered twelve pillars to be raised near the altar, according to the number of the twelve tribes.

Having delivered these laws to the people, and offered sacrifices to God, Moses took Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel some part of the way towards the mountain, where, without incurring the least hurt, they were vouchsafed a prospect of the Divine Presence. Here Moses, having committed the care of the people to these elders, left them, and, taking only Joshua with him, proceeded towards the mount, on arriving at which he left Joshua, and ascended it alone.

No sooner had Moses reached the summit of the mount, than the whole was covered with a thick cloud, and the glory of the Lord appeared upon it, like a devouring fire, in the sight of the children of Israel. On the seventh day God called to Moses, upon which he entered the midst of the cloud, and there continued for the space of forty days and forty nights.

During

* It is a pleasing reflection to say that it would be unnecessary to insert these commandments here, as there is not the least doubt but every reader is perfectly acquainted with them, as related in the 20th Chapter of Exodus.

† These Laws the Reader will find in the Book of Exodus, beginning at the 21st chapter, and ending at the 23d, both inclusive.

During this long stay of Moses in the Mount, he received instructions from God in what manner the Tabernacle should be made, wherein he intended to be worshipped. He described to him the form of the sanctuary, the table of the shew-bread, the altar of frankincense, the altar of burnt-offerings, the court of the Tabernacle, the basin to wash in, the Ark, the Candlestick, and all the other sacred utensils. He gave him the form of the sacerdotal vestments, and taught him how the priests were to be consecrated; what part of the oblation they were to take; and in what manner the perpetual sacrifice was to be offered. He appointed the two chief men who were to be the builders of the Tabernacle, namely, Bezaleel, of the tribe of Judah, and Aholiab, of the tribe of Dan. Having done this, and recommended a strict observation of the Sabbath, the Almighty gave Moses the two tables of stone, on which were written, with his own hand (at least by his own direction) the Ten great Commandments, which were the sum and substance of their Moral Law.

The long absence of Moses during his stay in the mount occasioned great murmurings among the people in the camp, who, giving their ruler over for lost, assembled themselves, in a riotous manner, about Aaron's tent, demanding him to make some gods to go before them. Astonishing as this demand was, yet such was the weakness of Aaron, and such his want of courage, that, instead of expostulating the matter with them, he not only tamely submitted to their request, but even contributed to their idolatry. He ordered them to take the golden ear-rings from their wives and children, and bring them to him: having done this, he converted them into the figure of a molten calf^s, with which the people were so well pleased that they unanimously exclaimed, "This is thy God, O Israel, that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt."

When Aaron saw with what satisfaction the people received their golden god (as if possessed with the same idolatrous spirit) he built an altar before it, and proclaimed a solemn feast to be held the succeeding day. But it proved rather a feast of revelling and luxury, than one arising from religious motives; for after they had made their oblations and peace-offerings, they sat down to eat and drink, and spent the whole day in feasting, dancing, and other imprudent amusements.

While the wanton Israelites were thus idolatrously revelling in the camp, Moses was in conversation with God on the mount, little suspecting so sudden a change in a people, who had so lately and solemnly entered into a covenant of obedience to all that God should command. But he from whom no secrets can be hid was instantly apprized of this sudden revolt: "Go, get thee down, said he; for thy people, whom thou broughtest out of Egypt, have corrupted

themselves. I know them to be an obstinate people; therefore intercede not for them, but see me express my resentment in their destruction; and to thee will I transfer the blessings I intended for them; and of thee will I make a great nation."

But so far was Moses from seeking his own interest in the destruction of the people, that he threw himself at the feet of the Lord, and interceded for their pardon with so much importunity, that the Almighty was at length, in some measure, appeased, and Moses had reason to imagine that he would not inflict on them the punishment he had intended.

Happy in having obtained this pardon for the Israelites, Moses, taking with him the two tables, on which were written the laws, hastened from the mount, and at the bottom of it found Joshua, who had been waiting his return. As they proceeded on towards the camp, Joshua, hearing the noise of people shouting, observed to Moses, that there was the sound of war in the camp. But Moses, who knew the cause of it, told him, that the noise was not like that which was either common to victory, or those who cried for quarter; but like the noise of those who rejoiced on some other occasion.

As soon as they approached the camp, Moses saw the golden calf, and the people dancing before it; at which he was so incensed, that, in the violence of his rage, he threw the tables, on which the law was written, against a stone on the ground, and they were broken to pieces. He then took the idol calf, and melted it, after which, grinding it into a powder, and mixing it with water (in order to make them more sensible of their folly in worshipping *that* for a God which was to pass through their bodies) he obliged them to drink it.

Having inflicted this punishment on the people, Moses proceeded to chastise Aaron for having suffered such idolatrous acts to be practised. But all the excuse he could make was, that the people became so turbulent that, for his own safety, he was compelled to comply with their demand.

But Moses's business was, to take vengeance on the idolaters; and, therefore, leaving his brother Aaron, he went into the midst of the camp, and called such to his assistance as had not been concerned in the late rebellion: "Let those, said he, who are for the Lord, join themselves with me." In consequence of this, all the sons of Levi (who were totally exempt from the general guilt) immediately repaired to Moses, who ordered them to take their swords, go through the camp, and kill all the ringleaders of this idolatrous defection, together with their adherents, without paying any respect to age or quality, friendship or consanguinity. The Levites strictly obeyed the orders of Moses, and the number slain on that day were about 3000 men. For this laudable zeal and ready obedience

^s It is the opinion of most commentators, that the reason why they worshipped the figure of a calf rather than any other creature was, from the corruptions they had learned among the Egyptians. These people worshipped their idol Apis, or Scapis, in a living bull, as likewise an image made in the

form and similitude of a bull with a bushel on his head, in memory, as some say, of Pharaoh's dreams, and Joseph's wife management in measuring out the corn to the people during the seven years famine.

ence Moses blessed the family of Levi, assuring them that by thus shedding the blood of their idolatrous brethren, without favour or distinction, they had obtained the approbation of the Lord, who would certainly not fail of rewarding them for it hereafter §.

This severe punishment inflicted on the idolatrous delinquents struck a terror throughout the whole camp. The next day Moses, in a very solemn manner, reproved them for their ingratitude and folly; but at the same time promised them, that he would go again up to the mount, and try how far his prayers would prevail with the Divine mercy, to avert the punishment which they had so justly deserved.

Moses, agreeable to his promise, returned to the mount, and acknowledged to the Lord the great sin committed by his people. At the same time he beseeched forgiveness for them with that earnestness and concern, that he prayed God to blot him out of his book, rather than not pardon them. But this was inconsistent with the Divine justice, and therefore God gave him this short answer, *Whoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.*

The Divine wrath being, in a great measure, appeased at the intercession of Moses, the Lord commanded him to lead the people to the place he had appointed; but at the same time let him know he was not willing to go with them, because, being a stiff-necked people, they might provoke him to consume them on the way. To shew, however, that he had not quite forsaken them, he told Moses, that he would send his angel before them to drive out the inhabitants of the promised land, that he might perform the oath which he had made to their forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

This was very afflicting news to the Israelites, who now plainly perceived, that God's withdrawing his immediate presence from them was the consequence of their rebellion; upon which they very grievously mourned, and, to shew their humiliation, laid aside the ornaments they were accustomed to wear.

But Moses, still to humble them the more, and to shew them how highly they had offended God by their wicked apostacy, took a tent, and pitching it at some distance without the camp, called it *the Tabernacle of the Congregation*, intimating, that the Lord was so highly offended with them for their idolatry, that he had removed from them, and would no longer dwell among them as he had hitherto done. Soon after Moses repaired to the tabernacle, which he had no sooner entered than it was surrounded by the cloudy pillar, which had so much assisted the Israelites in their departure from Egypt.

This additional token of the Divine wrath made the people particularly attentive to the motions of Moses; and therefore when he went out of the camp to the Tabernacle, they rose up, and stood every man at his tent door looking after him till he was got in. And when they

saw the cloudy pillar which they knew was a token of God's presence, they all fell down, and worshipped.

While Moses was in the Tabernacle he was visited by God, who permitted him, in a very familiar manner, to converse with him; which favour Moses improved to the advantage of the people, endeavouring, with the greatest importunity, to obtain a reconciliation between them and their justly offended God.

A short time after this the Almighty commanded Moses to prepare two new tables of stone, like the former which he had broken, and to come up alone with them in the morning to Mount Sinai, and I, said he, *will write in those tables the words that were in the first.*

Moses strictly obeyed this command, and, early in the morning, repaired to Mount Sinai with the two tables, where, prostrating himself before the Divine Majesty, he, with the greatest fervency, besought him to pardon the sins of the people. The Almighty was pleased to listen to his request, at the same time promising that he would make a covenant with his people on these conditions: That they should keep his commandments; that they should not worship the gods of the Canaanites; that they should make no alliances with the people of that country; that they should have no strange gods; and that they should strictly keep the sabbath, the passover, and other festivals ordained by the law.

For forty days and nights did Moses at this time continue (as he had done before) on Mount Sinai, without either eating or drinking, at the expiration of which he returned to the people, bringing with him the two tables of the Law. By the long converse he had held with God, his face had contracted such a lustre, that the people were not able to approach him; and therefore, whenever he talked with them, he covered his face with a veil, but took it off when he went into the Tabernacle to receive the Divine commands.

Agreeable to the instructions Moses had received from God during his last stay on the Mount, he called the people together, and informed them that it was the Lord's will to have a Tabernacle built for the performance of religious worship; and that he had commanded him to speak to them to bring in their offerings, which were to consist of such articles as were necessary for accomplishing the work*. These offerings were not to be exacted, but the people were to present them voluntarily; and so desirous were they of making some atonement for their past sins, that they soon brought in more than was requisite, so that Moses was obliged to cause proclamation to be made to restrain their liberality.

Having thus obtained a sufficient collection of all kinds of materials, Moses placed them in the hands of Bezaleel and Aholiah, the two great artists in building whom God had before made

§ This prediction was afterwards fulfilled; for, on the institution of the priesthood, the Levites were appointed to the honour and emoluments of that office, though in subordination to that of Aaron and his posterity.

* The directions given at this time were the same with those which Moses received on his first going up to the mount; but, by reason of the people's transgression in idolizing the calf, they were not then delivered to them.

made choice of; and so expeditious were they in executing the work, that, in less than six months, the Tabernacle, with all its rich furniture, were entirely compleated; and of which the following is an accurate description:

The Tabernacle was formed somewhat like a tent, though much larger, and the whole was covered with curtains and skins. It was divided into two parts, the one covered, and properly called the Tabernacle; and the other open, called the Court. The covered part was again divided into two other parts, one of which was called the *Holy of Holies*, and the curtains belonging to it were made of embroidered linen of several colours. There were ten curtains twenty-eight cubits long, and four broad: five curtains together made the two coverings, and the other five being joined to these covered the whole tabernacle. Above the rest were two other coverings, the one of goat's hair, the other of sheep-skins. These veils or coverings were laid on a square frame of planks resting on bases. There were forty-eight large planks, each a cubit and half wide, and ten cubits high, twenty of them on each side, and six at one end to the westward, and one on each corner: each plank was borne on two silver bases; they were let into one another, and held by bars, running the length of the planks. The east end was open, and only covered with a curtain. The Holy of Holies was parted from the rest of the Tabernacle by a curtain made fast to four pillars, standing ten cubits from the end. The whole length of the Tabernacle was thirty-two cubits, the upper curtain which hung on the north and south sides was eight cubits in length, and that on the east and west four cubits.

The Court was a spot of ground an hundred cubits long, and fifty in breadth, inclosed by twenty columns, each of them twenty cubits high, and ten in breadth, covered with silver, and standing on copper bases five cubits distant from each other, between which there were curtains drawn, and fastened with hooks. At the east end was an entrance twenty cubits wide covered with a curtain hanging loose.

The Ark was in the Sanctuary; it was a square chest made of shittim-wood, two cubits and a half long, and one cubit and a half wide and deep. It was covered with gold plates and had a gold cornice which bore the lid. On the sides of it were rings, to put poles thro' to carry it. The covering was all of gold, and called the Propitiatory or Mercy-seat. There were two cherubims on it, which covered it with their wings; the tables of the law were in the ark, which was therefore called the Ark of the Testimony, or of the Covenant.

The Table was made of cedar covered with gold, two cubits long, one in breadth, and one and a half in height. About the edge of it was an ornament; it stood on four feet, and had wooden bars plated with gold to carry it on. On it was laid the offering or shew-bread, (which was changed every day,) six loaves at each end, with incense over them. It was not lawful for any but the priests to eat of that bread.

The Candlestick was of pure gold, had seven

branches, three on each side, and one in the middle: each branch had three knobs like apples, and three sockets in the shape of half Almond-shells; that in the middle had four; on each branch was a gold lamp, and there were gold snuffers and nippers to dress them.

There were two altars, one for the burnt-offerings, five cubits long and wide, and three in height, with the figure of a seraphim at each corner. It was hollow, covered both within and without with brass plate, and open both at top and bottom. In the midst of it was a copper grate, standing on four feet, a cubit and a half high, and fastened with hooks and rings. On this grate were bound the offerings, for the performance of which there was every necessary article, such as kettles, ladles, tongs, hooks, &c.

The altar for incense was but one cubit in length and breadth, and two cubits high. It was plated with gold, and over it was a crown of the same metal. This altar was in the sanctuary with the ark; but that for burnt-offerings was placed on the north side of the tabernacle. On a pillar in the court was a large copper basin, with several cocks for the water to run out, that those who ministered might conveniently wash their hands previous to the discharge of their priestly function.

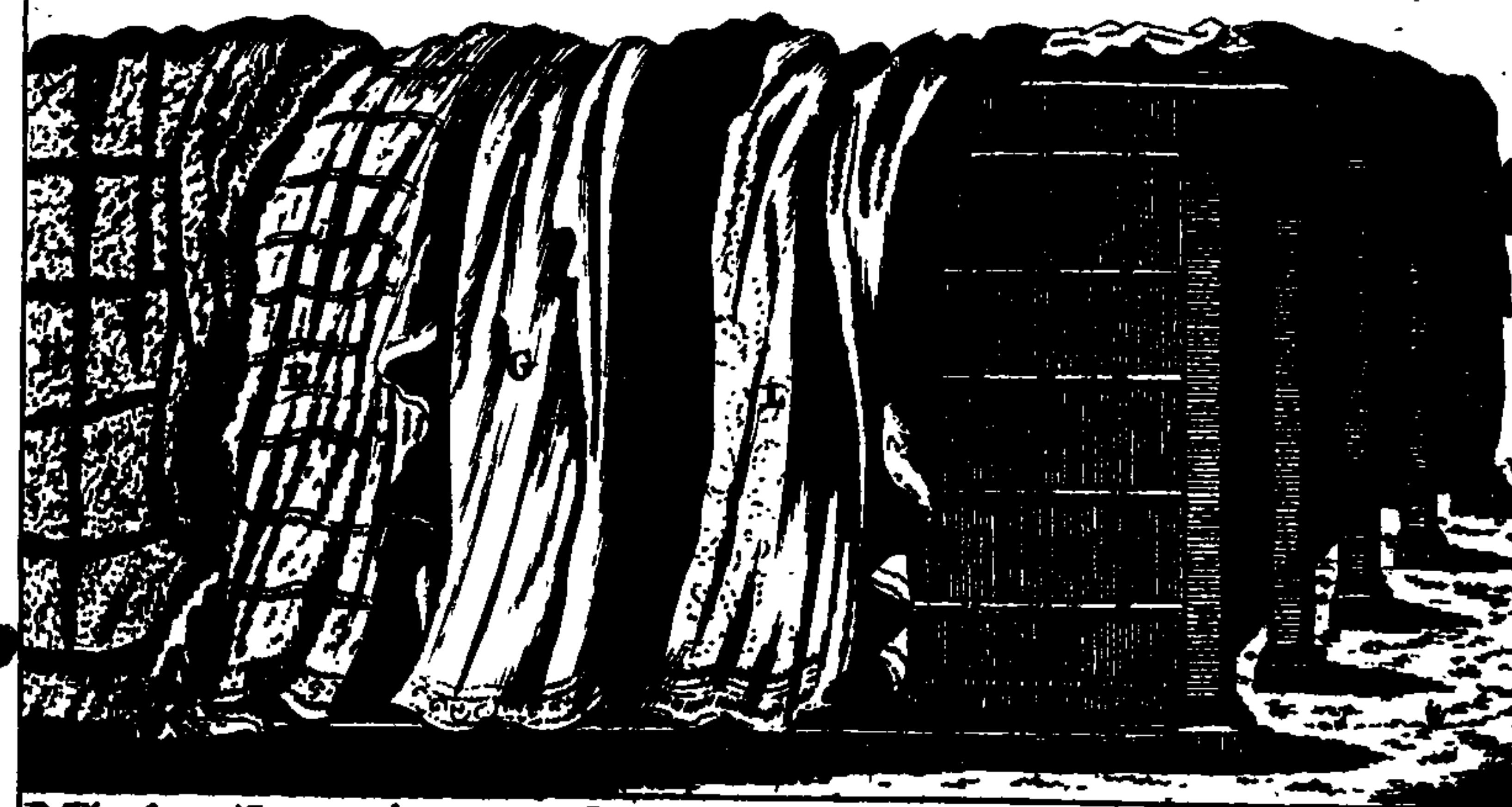
The vestments of the high-priest were, the breast-plate, the ephod, the robe, the close coat, the mitre and the girdle. The ephod, the robe, and the close coat were of fine linen, and covered the whole body from the neck to the heels. Over all was a purple tunick, a vestment larger and finer wrought, but not reaching so low, the bottom of which was ornamented with the representation of pomegranates and bells. The ephod consisted of two bands made of gold thread, and fastened to a kind of collar which hung down both before and behind from each shoulder, and meeting, served as a girdle to the tunick or vestment. On the shoulders were two large precious stones, which joined the front and hind parts of the ephod, and on them were marked the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, six on each. The breast-plate was made of the same materials as the ephod, to which it was fastened with gold chains. It was a square ornament, very thick and covered the whole breast. The girdle was likewise made of the same materials with the ephod. The mitre was made of fine flax, and covered the head; and in the front was a gold plate, on which were carved these words: **HOLINESS TO THE LORD.**—These were the solemn ornaments belonging to the high-priest: the others were only a simple tunick or vestment, a linen mitre and a girdle. They had all garments made of linen and cotton, which were fastened at the waist, from whence they reached down to about the middle of the legs.

Such was the form of the Tabernacle, and such the vestments appointed for the high-priest; the whole of which, as soon as compleated, was presented to Moses for his inspection and approbation. Having viewed them attentively, and found that all was done as the Lord had commanded, he first praised God, and then bestowed his benediction on the people,

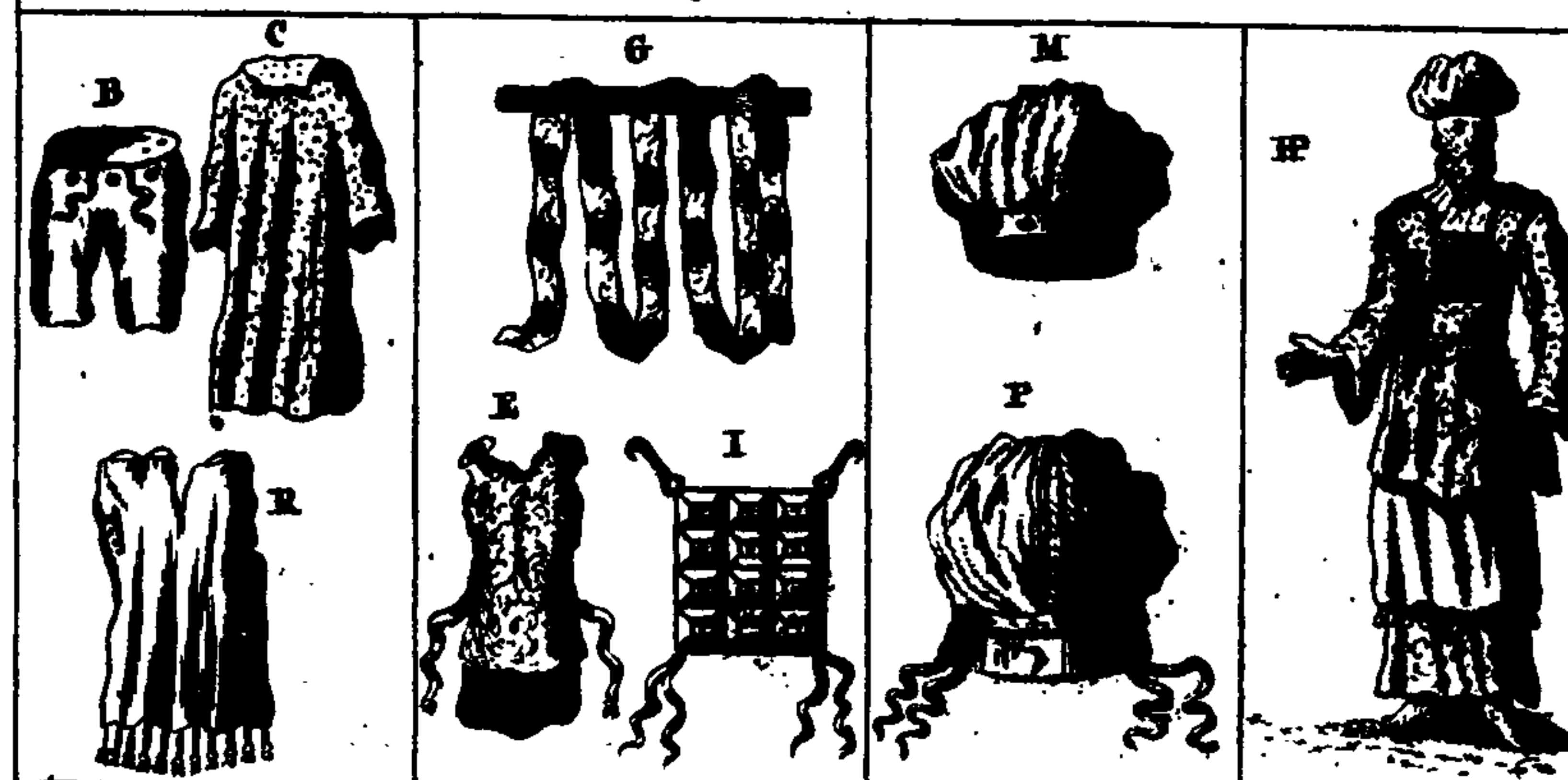
THE TABERNACLE WITH THE COURT AND CAMP.
A. The Tabernacle. B. The Laver. C. The Altar of burnt offering
D. The Court. E. The Cloud of Glory.



THE OUTSIDE OF THE TABERNACLE WITH ITS COVERINGS.



P. The five pillars at the entrance. B. The Boards. & The Silver Sockets R. & Rings and Staves or Bars. L. The under covering of fine Linen Curtains. G. Curtains of Goats hair. R. Covering of Rams skins. D. of Badgers Skins.



B. Linen Breeches for the Priest. C. Embroidered linen Coat. R. Robe of the Ephod all blue. G. Girdle of the Coat. E. Ephod & Girdle. I. Breast Plate & Jewels. M. Linen Mitre. P. Golden plate on the Mitre. H. High Priest full dressed.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



The **ARK of the COVENANT** *with the* **DIVINE GLORY**
descending thereon.

ple, for having so diligently attended to the Divine injunction.

All things being now ready, on the first day of the first month, in the second year after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, the Tabernacle was, by God's immediate command, set up, and all its rich furniture disposed in the proper places that had been appointed. But no sooner was this done, than the pillar of the cloud (which is called the Glory of the Lord) covered the whole, so that Moses himself, for some time, was not able to enter it †.

The Almighty, at length, promising Moses to enter the Tabernacle, gave him instructions (which he communicated to the people) in what manner (according to this new institution) he was to be worshipped by sacrifices and oblations; what festivals were to be observed, and how celebrated; what meats were forbidden; what the instances of uncleanness were; and what the degrees of consanguinity prohibited in marriage.

The creatures appointed to be offered in sacrifice were of five sorts, namely, Oxen, Lambs, Goats, Doves, and young Pigeons, all of which were to be males and without blemish. The person who presented the offering was to do it at the altar, laying his two hands on the head of the creature, and then cutting its throat. The blood was to be received in a basin, and with it the priest was to sprinkle the vessels and corners of the altar, throwing the principal part at the foot of it. The victim was to be flayed, cut in pieces and laid on the altar, where, either the whole, or some part of it (according to the several sorts of sacrifice) was to be burnt.

Libations were likewise added to the sacrifices. All the wine, or flour, offered with the victims, were called effusion, or pouring out. There was to be also a separate offering of fine flour and oil, baked on an iron, or in a pan, and sprinkled with oil and frankincense.

The sacrifices were of four sorts, namely,

1. The burnt-offering, every part of which was to be consumed by fire on the altar, after washing the feet and entrails.

2. The peace-offering, of which only the inward fat or tallow was to be burnt on the altar, made up with the liver and kidneys, and the tails of the lambs. The breast and the right shoulder belonged to the priests, the rest to him who offered the sacrifice.

3. The sacrifice of sin, committed either wilfully or ignorantly. In this the priest was to take some of the blood of the victim, dip his finger in it, and sprinkle seven times towards the veil of the sanctuary. The same parts of the victim were to be burnt on the altar in this as in the former sacrifice; the rest, if the sacrifice was offered for the sin of the high priest, or for the people, was to be carried without the camp to be burnt there, with the skin, the head, the feet, and the bowels. If it was for a private person, the victim was to be divided, one half to the priest, and the other to him who offered the sacrifice.

4. The Sacrifice of Oblation was to consist either of fine flour, or incense, or cakes of fine flour and oil baked, or the first-fruits of new corn. With the things offered were always to be oil, salt, wine and frankincense, the latter of which was to be thrown into the fire. Of the other things offered the priest was to take the whole, one part of which he was to burn, and the other to convert to his own use.

With respect to their festivals, the first and grand one to be observed was, the Sabbath; which they were to keep in the strictest manner, dedicating it wholly to rest, and not doing any kind of business whatever.

The Passover was likewise to be observed with great solemnity. It was to begin on the fourteenth day of the March moon; and for the seven days it lasted they were to eat only bread unleavened. The first day after the Passover they were to offer new ears of corn; and on the fifteenth day was to be held another feast, called the Harvest festival, on which they were to offer in thanksgiving two loaves made of new wheat, as the first-fruits of the harvest. The first day of the seventh month (which was the first of the civil year) was also to be held as a very solemn festival, in remembrance of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. On the tenth of the same month was to be kept the Feast of Expiation, on which day the priests were to go into the sanctuary, and offer two goats, one of which was to be there given up as a solemn sacrifice for sin; but the other was to be carried not only out of the tabernacle, but without the camp, also, and was therefore to be called the Scape-goat. On the fifteenth of the same month was to begin the Feast of Tabernacles, which was to last eight days, being kept as a memorial that the Israelites had been accustomed to live in tents. The whole time was to be spent in mirth, and each day the people were to walk round the altar with boughs in their hands.

With respect to animal food they were to be very careful in making a proper distinction between beasts that were clean, and those that were otherwise, it being lawful for them to eat the first, but not the last. Two qualifications were required for reckoning a beast clean, which were, that it should have a cloven foot, and that it should chew the cud; so that it was unlawful for them to eat swine's flesh, or rabbits and hares, the former not chewing the cud, and the latter not having cloven feet. All birds of prey were forbid; and it was unlawful for them to eat blood, or the flesh of beasts strangled.

Among the laws relative to uncleanness, leprosy was to be reckoned the greatest, of the nature and quality of which the priest was to judge, and to dispose of the party as he should think proper. Some uncleannesses were to be removed by washing their garments and bodies, and others by offering up sacrifices.

The laws relating to Matrimony were principally these. They were forbid to marry strange women.

† This cloud was afterwards a signal to the Israelites, by which they knew when to march and when to rest. While the cloud remained on the tabernacle, they continued where

it stood; but when the cloud left it, they proceeded on their march.

women. One man might have several wives; but the persons with whom it was not allowed to contract matrimony were, the father, mother, mother-in-law, sister by the father or mother's side, son's or daughter's daughter, father's wife's daughter, father or mother's sister, uncle, daughter-in-law, brother's wife, wife's sister or daughter, or grandson or grand-daughter. It was, however, not only lawful, but a command enjoined, that the brother should marry the brother's widow, provided he died without issue.

Moses, having communicated these, and some other ordinances, to the people, proceeded next, agreeable to the Divine command, to constitute his brother Aaron high-priest, and to fix the order of priesthood in his son and their posterity. In the execution of this ceremony Moses robed them, anointed their heads with oil, and made them offer sacrifices for sin. The function of the priests in general was, to offer sacrifice to the Lord, but the high-priest's was of a particular nature. He was to go once a year, on the day of Expiation, into the sanctuary, clad in his priestly garments, there to burn incense before the Ark, and sprinkle the blood of the offering seven times with his finger. All the tribe of Levi were appointed to assist the priests in the services of the Tabernacle; and to the whole were appointed particular allowances for their subsistence. But if any, either of the priests or Levites, had any bodily imperfection, they were to be excluded from the function, but, at the same time, permitted to enjoy the rights and privileges of their birth. The obligations they lay under were these: they were not to drink any wine, or any other intoxicating liquors, when they were to officiate in the Tabernacle: they were not to marry a woman who had been divorced, or prostituted; and, lastly, they were not to attend funerals, unless those of their own fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers, or maiden sisters.

On the eighth day after Aaron had been appointed to the office of high-priest, he offered his first burnt offering for himself and the people. This was very acceptable to the Almighty, who was pleased to testify his approbation by sending fire upon the altar, which consumed the offering in the sight of the people, who, with loud shouts and acclamations, expressed their joy for so singular a circumstance, and prostrated themselves on the ground in humble adoration before the Divine Majesty.

The fire thus miraculously kindled was, by the Divine command, to be kept perpetually burning, and no other to be used in all the

oblations to be made to God. But Nadab and Abihu, two of Aaron's sons, forgetful of their duty, took their censers and putting common fire in them, laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord. For this flagrant violation of the Divine command, the Almighty was so offended, that, as a just punishment, he immediately struck them dead with lightning. To strike a terror into the rest of the priestly order, and deter them from disobedience to the commands of God, Moses ordered the people to take their dead bodies from the sanctuary, and carry them out of the camp in the same condition they found them. He likewise charged Aaron and the rest of his sons, not to mourn for Nadab and Abihu, in shaving their heads, or rending their cloathes; but that they should leave those marks of mourning to the rest of the people, from whom they ought to distinguish themselves in this, as well as in other points, in reverence to that holy anointing, whereby they had been consecrated to the Lord, and thereby separated from their brethren.

A short time after the melancholy circumstance last related, another awful proof was given of the danger of incurring the displeasure of the Almighty. This was exemplified in the case of one, whose mother's name was Shelomith, an Israelitish woman of the tribe of Dan, but whose husband was an Egyptian, but supposed to have become a proselyte to the house of Israel. This young man quarrelled with another, and a battle ensuing, Shelomith was worsted. Fired with resentment at being conquered, he in the height of his passion, cursed and blasphemed the name of the Lord; upon which being apprehended and brought before Moses, he ordered him into custody till he should know from the Lord what punishment to inflict on him for his transgression. Though the third command in the Decalogue forbade the taking of God's name in vain, yet this blasphemous cursing being an offence of a higher nature, against which no positive law was yet provided, Moses had recourse to the Lord, who was pleased to tell him thus: Bring forth, says he, him that cursed without the camp, and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head†, and let all the congregation stone him.

In obedience to the Divine command, Moses ordered the sentence to be immediately put in execution; and a law was thereon made, that whosoever should, from that time, blaspheme the name of the Lord, whether he was an Israelite, or a stranger, should be stoned to death.

† This way of laying hands on the heads of criminals may seem to arise from several causes. 1. That they were witnesses of the fact, and that the person condemned suffered justly; protesting, that if he were innocent they desired his blood might fall on their own heads. 2. They put their hands on the head of the criminal in token of an expiatory

sacrifice; for idolatry, blasphemy, and such grievous crimes, if they were not punished, they expected would attract a guilt, not only on the witness, but the whole nation, which by the death of the criminal, as by a victim, might be expiated. 3. That the criminal was the just cause of his own death.

C H A P X.

Manner of encamping and marching the Israelites. Moses appoints seventy elders to assist him in the government of the people. The Israelites murmur for the want of flesh, after being supplied with which they are afflicted with a plague. Aaron and his sister Miriam endeavour to raise a sedition, for which the latter is severely punished. Moses sends spies into the land of Canaan. The report given on their return occasions great murmurings among the people, for which the Almighty threatens to punish them; but, by the intercession of Moses, the judgment is averted. The sabbath-breaker punished with death. The rebellion of Korah, and the destruction that attended it. Aaron's priesthood confirmed to him by a miracle on his rod. Moses supplies the people with water out of a rock. Death of Aaron.

WHILE the Israelites lay encamped in the wilderness of Sinai, the Almighty ordered Moses, assisted by Aaron, and the heads of the respective tribes, to make a general muster of the people, in order to ascertain the number of those who were able to carry arms. This was accordingly done, when the number of true born Israelites appeared to be 603,550 men §, exclusive of the tribe of Levi. These were, by the express command of the Almighty, exempted, being designed for the peculiar service of the tabernacle, not only to take charge thereof, and of all the vessels belonging to it, but likewise to take it down upon every remove, to guard it safe on the way, and to put it up again at such places as should be appointed for encampment.

The Israelites being thus mustered, Moses and Aaron, by the express command of God, appointed the manner of their encampment, which was not only to take place now, but to be continued ever after, as follows:

The whole body was divided into four grand camps, each consisting of three tribes, under one standard ||, and so placed as entirely to enclose the Tabernacle.

The standard of the camp of Judah was first. It consisted of the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, (the sons of Leah) and was pitched on the east side of the Tabernacle, towards the rising of the sun.

§ The ages of these men were, from twenty years old to fifty; and the exact number in each tribe was as follows:

In the tribe of	Reuben	- - -	46,500
	Simeon	- - -	59,300
	Gad	- - -	45,650
	Judah	- - -	74,600
	Issachar	- - -	54,400
	Zebulun	- - -	57,400
	Ephraim	- - -	40,500
	Manasseh	- - -	32,200
	Benjamin	- - -	35,400
	Dan	- - -	62,700
	Asher	- - -	41,500
	Naphtali	- - -	53,400
	Total		603,550

On the south side was the standard of the camp of Reuben, under which were the tribes of Reuben and Simeon (the sons of Leah likewise) and of Gad, the son of Zilpah, Leah's maid.

On the west side was the standard of the camp of Ephraim, under which were the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin.

On the north side was the standard of the camp of Dan, under which were the tribes of Dan and Naphtali, (the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid) and of Asher (the son of Zilpah.)

Between the four great camps and the Tabernacle were four lesser camps, consisting of the priests and Levites, under whose immediate care and protection the Tabernacle was placed.

On the east side were encamped Moses and Aaron, with Aaron's sons, who had the charge of the sanctuary.

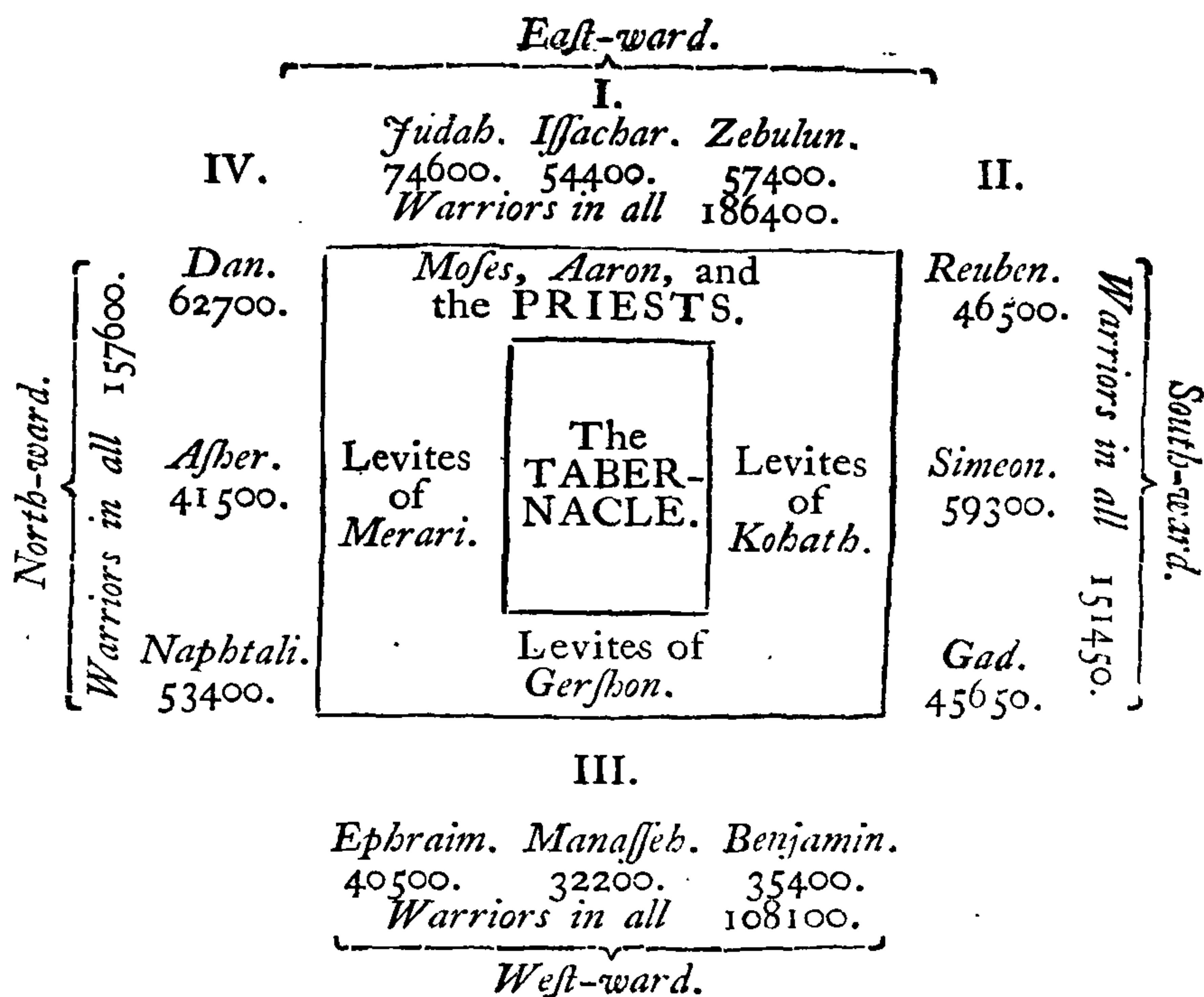
On the south side were the Kohathites, a part of the Levites, descended from Kohath, the second son of Levi.

On the west side were the Gershonites, another part of the Levites, descended from Gershon, Levi's eldest son.

On the north side were planted the Merarites, the remaining part of the Levites, who descended from Merari, Levi's youngest son.

Such was the manner of the encampment of the Israelites; a ready and clear view of which will appear from the following table:

|| Each of these great camps had its peculiar banner or standard, and each standard its motto or inscription. Each standard had likewise a distinct figure marked on it. Reuben's standard had the figure of a man: Judah's, of a lion: Ephraim, of an ox; and Dan's, that of an eagle. The same four creatures are used by the prophet Ezekiel in the description of his first vision. Every cherub is said to have four faces; the face of a man to shew his understanding; of a lion, to shew his power; of an ox to shew his ministerial office; and of an eagle, to shew his swiftness in the execution of God's will. Under the same four, in the opinion of the Fathers, are represented the four Evangelists. The Man represents St. Matthew, because he begins his Gospel with the generation of Christ: the Lion, St. Mark, because he begins his Gospel from the voice of the lion roaring in the wilderness: the Ox, St. Luke, because he begins with Zacharias, the priest; and the Eagle, St. John, who, soaring aloft, beginneth with the divinity of Christ.



The encampment being thus formed, the next consideration was, to regulate the mode of marching, which was accordingly done as follows:

Whenever they were to decamp (which was always to take place as soon as the pillar of the cloud left the Tabernacle) the trumpet was to be immediately sounded, and, upon the first alarm, the standard of Judah being raised, the three tribes which belonged to it were to set forward. On the movement of these the Tabernacle was to be taken down with all convenient expedition, and the Gershonites and Merarites were to attend the waggons with the boards and staves belonging to it. This being done, a second alarm was to be given by the trumpet, on which the standard of Reuben's camp were to advance with the three tribes belonging to it. After these were to follow the Kohathites, bearing the sanctuary, which, because it was more holy, and not so cumbersome, as the pillars and boards of the Tabernacle was not to be put into a waggon, but carried on their shoulders. Next was to follow the standard of Ephraim's camp, with the tribes belonging to it; and, last of all, the other three tribes, under the standard of Dan, were to bring up the rear.

A short time after these matters were adjusted, the Pillar of the Cloud gave the Israelites a signal to decamp. On their beginning to move, agreeable to the order prescribed, Moses addressed himself to God. *Rise, said he, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.* And when the ark of the covenant (by which they were directed when to stop) rested, he added, *Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.*

After marching for three days in the wilderness of Sinai, the Israelites began to complain of the fatigues of their journey, and to relate

their grievances, with great asperity, to Moses. This so offended the Almighty, that he sent down fire from heaven, which destroyed all those who were situated in the extreme parts of the camp. The rest were so terrified at this circumstance, that they immediately applied to Moses, at whose intercession the fire ceased, but, in remembrance of the incident, he called the place Taberah, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *burning*.

But this instance of the Divine power had little effect on the dissatisfied Israelites. They made heavy complaints for want of flesh for food; and intimated to Moses how much happier they were when in the land of Egypt, where, though in a state of bondage, they could possess a variety of articles necessary for the preservation of life.

Moses had often heard them murmur, and patiently borne with it, but now that they were grown so numerous, and the greatness of their numbers demanding still more care and vigilance to govern them than what came from the assistance of the magistrates appointed by the advice of his father-in-law Jethro, he became exceeding uneasy, and, in an address to God, represented the great and heavy burthens under which he laboured, in having the management of so numerous and dissatisfied a people.

No sooner did the Almighty hear the complaints of his faithful servant, than he immediately gave him relief, by ordering him to chuse seventy men from among the Elders of Israel, and to bring them with him to the Tabernacle of the Congregation. "There, said he, I will come down and talk with thee, and I will give them a portion of the same spirit with which I have inspired thee; and they shall bear the burthen of the people with thee."

In

In conformity to the Divine command, Moses selected seventy of the elders, sixty-eight of whom he conducted to the Tabernacle, whither they had no sooner arrived, than the Almighty was pleased to fulfil his promise, by inspiring them with the like kind of spirit he had given to Moses, and by which they were enabled to prophecy. Nay, so extensive was this inspiration, that though the other two came not out with the rest to the tabernacle, but remained in the camp, yet they received the same impression of the spirit with the rest, and, in like manner, prophesied. This circumstance so surprized a certain young man in the camp, that he immediately hastened to the tabernacle, to acquaint Moses that Edad and Medad (which were the names of the two elders left behind) were prophesying in the camp. Joshua (who was totally unacquainted with the operations of the Lord by his spirit) was likewise greatly surprized, and, thinking it a derogation of his master, likewise ran to the tabernacle, and advised Moses to restrain them from that power which only belonged to himself. But Moses reprov'd him for his conduct in these words: "Dost thou, said he, envy them on my account? Would to God that all the Lord's people were inspired, and that they might be endued with the spirit of prophecy!"

The murmurings of the people for want of flesh still continued, and to such a height did their fury arise, that they beset Moses's tent on all sides, and, in the most tumultuous manner, demanded of him to relieve their necessities. Thus circumstanced Moses applied himself to God, to whom he intimated the little probability there was of supplying so numerous a body of people with the article requested. The Almighty was pleased to promise that he would remove this evil; and at the same time gently rebuked Moses in these words. *Is the Lord's hand* (said he) *waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not.*

It was not long before this Divine promise was fulfilled; for the Almighty causing a south wind to arise, it drove prodigious quantities of Quails from the sea-coast to within a mile of the camp, which being taken by the people, they feasted on them in the most greedy manner.

But God soon called them to a dreadful account for their insolent demand of flesh, and their distrust of his Providence: for while they were regaling themselves with these dainties, he visited them with a severe plague*, of which great numbers died, and were buried on the spot where they fell. In consequence of this circumstance the place was called Kibroth-Hattavah, which signifies *the Graves or Sepulchres of Lust and Concupiscence.*

From this place the Israelites marched to Hazeroth, where they had not been long before

another circumstance occurred of a very disagreeable nature. Aaron and his sister Miriam, observing the great power their brother Moses had over the people, and that God chiefly made use of him in the delivery of his sacred oracles, began to look upon him with an eye of envy. To give some colour to their conduct, they pretended to fall out with him, on account of his having married a foreigner, whom they contemptuously called an Ethiopian†; and, to lessen his importance, and at the same time enlarge their own, they added, *What, hath the Lord spoken only to Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?*

Moses saw the discontent of his brother and sister; but considering it only as a personal pique, took no notice of it. The Almighty, however, being greatly offended at their conduct, thought proper to interpose, and convince them that such behaviour to his faithful servant was of the most heinous nature, and should not pass unnoticed. Ordering, therefore, Moses, Aaron and Miriam to attend at the door of the tabernacle, he sharply rebuked the two latter for their insolence, asking them, how they durst speak against his servant Moses? "You, (said he to Miriam) have shared in the prophetic office, and to you have I declared my will in dreams and visions; but with Moses I have answered more familiarly, and I will speak face to face with him, and shew him as much of my glory as he is capable of seeing."

Thus Moses had the secret satisfaction of finding himself justified by his Divine protector; but Aaron, to his great confusion, beheld his sister Miriam made a dreadful example of God's anger. She was suddenly afflicted with a most dreadful and inveterate leprosy; upon which Aaron, addressing himself to Moses, acknowledged the sin they had committed, begged pardon, and solicited him to intercede with God in behalf of his sister, that the leprosy might be removed, and her former health restored.

Moses, who was naturally of a meek disposition, and ever ready to pardon an injury offered to himself, made no hesitation at complying with Aaron's request. His intercession had the desired effect: the Almighty was pleased to promise that the evil should be removed; but as the offence was of a public nature, he ordered her to be turned out of the camp for seven days, in the manner of a common leper, in order to deter others from committing the like seditious practices.

Soon after Miriam's return to the camp, the Israelites removed to the desert of Paran; from whence, after several encampments, they reached Kadesh-Barnea, situated on the frontiers of the Land of Canaan.

On their arrival at this place, Moses, by the Divine command, selected twelve men, one from each tribe, whom he ordered to go as spies into the

* This plague seems to have been of a suffocating nature, and to have choked them, either while they were eating, or very soon after; as appears from the words in the text. *While the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people.* This is farther confirmed in Psal. lxxviii. 30, 31.

† Zipporah, Moses's wife, was a Midianite; and because

Midian bordered on Ethiopia, she was so called, and it is sometimes, in the scriptures, comprehended under this name. But here Zipporah is called an Ethiopian by way of ridicule, which they should not have done, as she had submitted to the law, and, therefore, though of another country, ought to have been esteemed an Israelite.

the promised land, to take a view of the country. He charged them to make a diligent examination into the strength of its cities and inhabitants, the nature and fertility of its soil, and the principal articles it produced, some of the latter of which he told them to bring with them on their return.

With these instructions the twelve spies set forward on their journey, and proceeded from the entrance of the country on the north, to its extremity on the south. In their way back they passed through a valley remarkable for its fertility in vines, and therefore called the *Valley of Eschol*, which signifies a *cluster of grapes*. Attracted by the beauty of the fruit, they determined to preserve some and carry it to the camp. They cut down a branch, on which was only one cluster of grapes, but of such an immoderate size, that they were obliged to lay it on a pole, and carry it between two of them. Nor was this the only product of this happy soil: the golden fig and beautiful pomegranate adorned the trees, and a variety of other fruits, (of which they took samples with them) loaded the luxuriant branches.

The spies having, in the compass of forty days, taken a view of the whole country of Canaan, returned to the camp of the Israelites; and, after shewing them the fruits of the land, gave them an account of the observations they had made in the course of their journey. "We have been, (said they) in the country to which you sent us. It is a fertile and plentiful land; but the inhabitants of it are powerful. There are great cities with strong walls. We have seen those men of the race of Anak, warlike men, and of a gigantic stature. The Amalekites inhabit the south part of the land; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites, the mountains; and the Canaanites, the banks of the river Jordan."

The people were highly pleased with that part of the account relative to the fertility of the country; but when they reflected on its strength, with the size and number of its inhabitants, they were greatly alarmed, and expressed their fears at being brought to a place where they were in the most imminent danger. But Caleb and Joshua (two of the twelve who were sent to view the country) endeavoured to remove their fears, by saying, "Let us make ourselves masters of the country, for we are strong enough to conquer the inhabitants."

This had the desired effect, and might have produced happy consequences had it not been for the cowardly disposition of the other ten, who, perceiving that the account given by Caleb and Joshua had fired the people with a design of becoming the possessors of the country by a speedy conquest, began to retract from their former accounts, to paint matters in the worst light, and to represent it as a thing impossible, both by reason of the strength of its fortified towns, and the valour and gigantic stature of the inhabitants.

This cowardly representation defeated all the arguments used by Caleb and Joshua in favour of the enterprize. The Israelites, one and all, cried out, they could never hope to overcome such powerful nations, in comparison of which

they looked on themselves as mere grasshoppers and reptiles. In short, their murmuring grew to such an height by the next morning, that a return to Egypt was thought more advisable than to face such an enemy: and they went so far as to deliberate on a proper person who should reconduct them into the land of their former thralldom.

This perverseness of the people greatly afflicted Moses, who, finding them bent on their own ruin, and fearful that some dreadful consequence would follow, prostrated himself on the ground (as did also his brother Aaron) in the presence of the whole assembly, and besought of God that he would be merciful in his judgments on the people for their sin and ingratitude.

Caleb and Joshua expressed their grief by rending their cloathes; and endeavoured, in the most forcible manner, to convince the people that their fears were ill founded, and that they might, by putting their trust in God, overpower their enemies, and make themselves masters of the promised land. "The land (said they) that we passed through is, indeed, a rich and fertile land, abounding with all things necessary for life. If we please the Lord he will bring us into this land, and give it us. Do not, therefore, by rebelling against him, forfeit his promise and protection. Nor be afraid of the people of the land, whom we shall as surely conquer as we eat our food, and with as much ease. The Lord is with us, and we have nothing to fear."

But so far was this speech from making any impression on the perverse and obstinate Israelites, that, in a tumultuous manner, they called out to stone Caleb and Joshua; and which they would certainly have done, had not the Glory of God, at that instant, visibly appeared before all the people, in the Tabernacle of the Congregation.

As soon as Moses saw this, he prostrated himself before the Lord, who being highly incensed against the Israelites for their perverse conduct, threatened to send a pestilence that should totally extirpate them, and at the same time told Moses, that he would make him a prince of a more numerous and powerful nation.

The pious Moses (as he had several times done before) became again an intercessor for the people. He, in the most earnest manner, solicited the Almighty to pardon their offences, and represented the consequences that might follow should he totally destroy them: the substance of his solicitations and observations were in words to this effect: "O thou everlasting Jehovah, who appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and Jacob, and who was graciously pleased to promise that their children should inherit the land of Canaan, look in mercy on this people, whom neither promises will encourage, nor threatenings deter from disobeying thee. O Lord, turn away thy fierce anger, for thou art a God of mercy, and I will trust in thee to spare this wicked, this rebellious people."

These arguments and expostulations, in some measure, averted the Divine vengeance, the Almighty promising Moses not to put his first design into execution. But, as the ingratitude and infidelity of the people were become intolerable (notwithstanding God's constant care in provid-

ding against their wants, screening them from their enemies, and preserving them from all dangers) he declared that not one of those who had murmured from twenty years old and upwards should ever enter the promised land; but that they should wander, with their children about the wilderness for the space of forty years, in which time they should all pay the debt of nature, and that their children should have those possessions, which, had they not been so disobedient, they might have enjoyed themselves.

As for the ten false spies, who were the immediate authors of this defection, they were all destroyed by a sudden death, and became the first instances of the punishment denounced against the body of the people.

Caleb and Joshua, who had not only done their duty in giving a faithful account of their observations, but also endeavoured to remove the ill-concerted intentions of the people, were preserved. For this their conduct they received the Divine approbation, as also a promise, that they should live to enter, and inherit, the promised land.

When Moses related these particulars to the people, their tempers were greatly altered, and they expressed their uneasiness for the offence they had committed by putting on the deepest mourning. Supposing that their forwardness now would make some atonement for their former cowardice, they assembled themselves together the next morning, and offered to go on the conquest. "We are ready, said they, to go to the place whereof the Lord has spoken to us."

But this offer, instead of arising from any natural courage, took place only from a presumptuous rashness. This Moses well knew, and therefore endeavoured all he could to dissuade them from so ill-judged an enterprize. He told them it was contrary to God's express command, and therefore could not prosper: that, by their late undutiful behaviour they had forfeited his assistance and protection, without which it was impossible for them to succeed; and that, as the Amalekites and Canaanites had gained the passes of the mountains before them, every attempt must prove abortive.

But all this admonition had no weight with the obstinate Israelites. Notwithstanding the Ark of the Covenant was not with them; notwithstanding Moses, their general, was not at the head of them; yet out they marched to the top of the mountains, where the enemy surprising them, they were immediately thrown into the greatest disorder, prodigious numbers were slain, and the rest obliged to save themselves by flight; nor did they stop till they came to a place called Hormah. Though it was but eleven days journey from hence to Kadesh-Barnea, yet, for their disobedience, they were so interrupted as to be near two years in getting to the place from whence they came.

Many remarkable circumstances occurred du-

ring the stay of the Israelites in the wilderness. The first recorded by the sacred historian is an instance of the Divine severity on a man, who, by a post-fact-law, was adjudged to be stoned to death for violating the sabbath, by gathering sticks on that day. Though a particular injunction had been laid on the people to keep this commandment in the strictest manner, yet no penalty had been annexed to the violation of it. The people, therefore, who brought the offender before Moses, were ordered to keep him in custody, till he should know the Divine pleasure concerning Sabbath-breakers. The Almighty was pleased to return for answer, that such transgressors should be stoned to death; upon which the offender was immediately conducted out of the camp, and the sentence executed.

The next material circumstance that occurred was, a violent rebellion raised by Korah, great grand-son of Levi, and consequently one of the heads of that tribe. This ambitious person, having long envied Aaron, on account of him and his family being raised to the highest office in the priesthood, and to which he thought himself had an equal title, was always caballing against him, till at length he had brought over two hundred and fifty eminent persons to his interest, among whom were, Dathan and Abiram two of the chiefs of the tribe of Reuben.

As soon as Korah thought matters properly ripe for an open rupture, he appeared at the head of the faction, and publicly upbraided Moses and Aaron with an unjust ambition, in usurping that power to themselves of which he thought himself entitled to a part; and that the arbitrary measures they pursued were injurious to the people, by depriving them of their just and natural liberties.

This strange and unexpected address so surprised Moses, that he immediately prostrated himself on the ground, in which situation he lay for some time*. At length he arose, and with great steadiness and magnanimity, informed them, that the next day the Lord would decide the controversy, and would make it appear who were his servants, who were holy, and who the proper persons to be admitted into his Divine presence. He then, with his usual calmness and serenity of mind, argued the matter with them, and, in the most mild manner, rebuked them for the impropriety of their conduct. He was rather more severe on Korah (who was the author of the defection) than the rest; and concluded with addressing them conjunctively in words to this effect: "Hear me (says he) ye sons of Levi: Is it a matter of so light concern, that the God of Israel hath distinguished you from the rest of Israel, to admit you to the more immediate service of the tabernacle, and to stand before the congregation,

" gation,

* It is very reasonable to imagine, that Moses (who was well acquainted with the gracious and ready assistance of God in time of need) was, during the time of his being on the ground, applying himself to the Lord for protection against this mutinous body of people. And it is likewise reasonable

to imagine, that while he lay in this humble posture God appeared to him, and gave him comfortable advice in what manner he should conduct himself; as he soon after spoke to them with great courage, and, to vindicate himself, put the matter between him and them upon trial the next day.

“gation, and minister to them? Is not this
 “an honour sufficient to satisfy your ambi-
 “tious spirit, but that ye must aim at the
 “priesthood too? This is the cause of your
 “clamours; and for this ye have moved
 “the people to sedition. But be assured,
 “whatever ye may pretend against Aaron,
 “this insult is against the Lord, as it is
 “against his dispensations that ye murmur
 “and conspire.”

Dathan and Abiram were at some distance when Moses thus talked with the rest of the conspirators; and therefore, supposing they had been drawn into the plot at the instigation of Korah, he sent for them privately, with a design of arguing the matter with them in the mildest terms. But instead of a civil answer he received the following haughty message: “Is it (said they) a matter of so small moment, that thou hast brought us out of a land which flowed with plenty, to kill us in the desert? Thou affectest dominion, and wouldest make thyself prince over us also. Notwithstanding thy fair promises, thou hast not brought us into a land that flows with milk and honey, nor given us any inheritance of fields and vineyards; but when we were ready to take possession of the promised land, thou didst turn us back into this barren desert; to repeat the fatigues and hardships we had before undergone. We will not come.”

These unjust reproaches highly provoked Moses, but, instead of returning any ill language to them, he addressed himself to God, saying, *Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.* He then summoned Korah, and all his companions, to meet him and Aaron the next day at the tabernacle, and to bring with them their censers ready prepared with incense, to appear before the Lord.

Accordingly, early the next morning Moses and Aaron went to the tabernacle, whither Korah also repaired at the head of his party, with each man a censer in his hand, and attended by a prodigious multitude of people, who, in all probability, went as spectators of this singular contest.

The first thing that attracted their attention was, the amazing splendor that issued from the cloud over the tabernacle, from which God called to Moses and Aaron, ordering them to withdraw, that he might inflict that punishment on the rebellious crew they justly deserved.

Moses and Aaron knowing that the multitude who attended on this occasion did it only to gratify their curiosity, and at the same time lamenting that they should equally suffer with the wicked Korah and his party, prostrated themselves before God, and interceded for their protection. “O God, (said they) thou God of the spirit of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be angry with all?” Their prayers were no sooner offered than heard, and the Almighty being pleased to listen to their solicitation, commanded them to tell the people to withdraw. Frightened at the amazing splendor that issued from the cloud, they rea-

dily obeyed this order, and retired at some distance from the tents of Korah, and his two principal associates, Dathan and Abiram, who stood, in a daring manner, near their own tents, attended by their wives and families.

As soon as the multitude had retired to a proper distance, Moses addressed them in words to this effect: “By this (said he) you shall know that the Lord has commissioned me to do what I have done, and that I have undertaken nothing of my own head. If these men (meaning Korah and his party) die the common way of nature, or be visited as other men, then take it for granted the Lord hath not sent me; but if he deal with them after a strange and unusual manner, and the earth, opening her mouth, swallow them up alive, then shall ye understand that these men have provoked the Lord.”

No sooner had Moses spoken these words than the earth was suddenly convulsed, and the surface of it opening, Korah and his two adherents Dathan and Abiram, together with their families and substance, were all swallowed up alive, and the ground closing on them, they perished. When the people who stood round saw their dismal fate, they were greatly frightened, and cried out, Let us fly, *lest the earth swallow us up also.*

In the mean time God, to punish the rest of these rebellious people, who had profanely attempted to offer incense contrary to the law, sent down fire from heaven, and destroyed the whole two hundred and fifty men that had joined with Korah.

To perpetuate the memory of this judgment, as well as to deter, for the future, any, but the sons of Aaron, from presuming to burn incense before the Lord, Moses, by the Divine command, ordered Eleazar, Aaron's son, to gather up the censers of the dead, and to have them beat into broad plates as a covering for the altar; assigning this as a reason, “That it might be for a memorial to the children of Israel, that no stranger, or any that was not of Aaron's family, should presume to offer incense before the Lord, lest he died the death of Korah and his company.”

It might have been supposed that so dreadful a punishment would, at least for some time, have kept the Israelites within the bounds of their obedience; but no sooner were they recovered from their fright, than they again began to murmur, and to accuse Moses and Aaron with having (as they called the late mutineers) murdered *the people of the Lord.*

Moses and Aaron, well knowing the turbulent temper of the people, and fearing they might proceed to some violent outrage, took sanctuary in the tabernacle, which they had no sooner entered than the Almighty commanded them to withdraw from the rest of the congregation, for that in a short time he would destroy them.

In consequence of this Moses and Aaron immediately prostrated themselves on the ground, and earnestly implored of God to spare the people; but, early as they were in their supplication, the Divine vengeance was before them,

them, for the Almighty, provoked by the repeated rebellions of the people, had already sent a pestilence among them.

As soon as Moses observed this, he ordered Aaron to take a censer, put fire and incense in it from the altar, and hasten to the congregation to make atonement for the sins of the people. Aaron did as Moses commanded, and standing between the dead and the living, he prayed for some time, and the plague ceased. But, notwithstanding the very short time this calamity lasted, yet, with such violence did it rage, that the number carried off by it amounted to 14,700 persons.

Though God had thus, in two instances, punished the people for their wickedness, yet, knowing that the minds of many of them were, by the insinuations of Korah and his accomplices, still prejudiced against Aaron and his family, on account of their being invested with the priesthood, he was pleased to put an end to all controversy on this head by the following miracle. He commanded Moses to take a rod from each tribe, and to write upon it the name of the prince of that tribe to whom it belonged; and to write Aaron's name on that of the tribe of Levi. That when this was done, he should lay up the twelve rods in the tabernacle, before the Ark of the Testimony, until the next morning, when some miraculous change should be seen as would determine in whose family the priesthood should be established.

Moses, who never failed paying an immediate obedience to the Divine command, did as he was ordered; and going next morning to the tabernacle, brought out the twelve rods in the presence of all the people. Eleven of the rods were in the same state as when he put them into the tabernacle, but the twelfth (which belonged to Aaron) had a very different appearance, for it had not only budded, but likewise blossomed, and bore ripe almonds. A convincing proof to the people that God had singled out Aaron and his family to the priestly office.

In memory of this remarkable decision, God ordered Aaron's rod to be laid up in the Ark of the Covenant, that, by the people's seeing it, they might not again rebel, but remain satisfied with those whom he had been pleased, in so distinguished a manner, to appoint to the priestly office.

After the establishment of the high-priest's office in Aaron and his family, the Israelites moved about, from one place to another, in the wilderness, but chiefly about the mountains of Idumæa, until God, by shortening the period of human life, had taken away almost all that generation, of whom he had sworn in his wrath (as the Psalmist expresses it, xcv. 11.) that they should not enter into his rest. And, indeed, great reason had he to be angry with them, since, during the remainder of their peregrination, they

were guilty of many more murmurings than Moses has thought proper to record, which, nevertheless, are mentioned, with no small severity, by other inspired writers.—See Amos v. 26. Acts vii. 43.

As the time, however, of their entrance into the land of Canaan drew near, they advanced into the wilderness of Zin, and pitched their camp at Kadesh†, where Miriam‡, sister to Moses and Aaron, died, and was buried.

The Israelites had not been long at Kadesh, before they were greatly distressed for water, upon which (as they had before done on similar occasions) they exclaimed, with great vehemence, against Moses and Aaron, saying, “Why have ye brought the Lord's people into the wilderness to kill them and their cattle? Why did you persuade us to leave the fertile land of Egypt to bring us into this barren place, which affords neither water to quench our thirst, nor fruits to satisfy our hunger? Would to God we had perished with our brethren before the Lord.”

The impatience and dissatisfaction of the Israelites greatly perplexed Moses and Aaron, who, as was their usual custom on such occasions, addressed themselves to God, beseeching him to remove the present distresses of the people. The Almighty was pleased to listen to their request: he ordered Moses to take his rod, and, with the assistance of Aaron, assemble the people together; which having done, he should *speak to the rock in their sight, and it should immediately produce abundance of water.*

Agreeable to these orders, Moses and Aaron assembled the people before the rock, who, no doubt, readily attended in expectation of having those grievances removed of which they had so greatly complained. Hitherto Moses had paid an *exact* and absolute obedience to all the commands God had enjoined him; but now (however it happened) he made some deviation from his instructions, and thereby committed the greatest miscarriage of his whole life. He was ordered to speak to the *rock* before the people; but, instead of so doing, he spoke to the *people*, saying, *Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?* In doing this, he expressed impatience and heat of spirit, which were in direct opposition to that humility he had hitherto possessed.

This conduct of Moses was highly offensive to God, as appeared from his first striking the rock without its having the least effect. However, on striking it a second time, the water issued from it in great abundance, and not only the people, but likewise the cattle, were plentifully supplied with that necessary article they had so much wanted.

Though this was the first time that Moses had made the least deviation from the Divine injunctions, yet it pleased the Almighty to make him

† This was not Kadesh-Barnea, the station or encampment of the Israelites on the confines of the northern part of Canaan; but another Kadesh, situated on the confines of Idumæa, and not far from the Red Sea.

‡ Miriam was the eldest of the three, and was near an hundred and thirty years old. Eusebius assures us, that in

his time her tomb was found at Kadesh, a small distance from Petra, the capital of Arabia Petraea. Several of the ancients are of opinion that she died a virgin, and that she was the legislatrix and governess of the Israelitish women, as Moses was the legislator of the men.

him sensible of his fault, and to inflict a punishment on him for his disobedience. Considering Aaron also as concerned with him in the transgression, he denounced this sentence against them conjunctively. *Because, said he, ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.* From this unhappy accident, the place was called Meribah, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies, *chiding or strife.*

Though Moses had committed this offence, and received the Divine chastisement, yet he still preserved the command and government of the people. Intending to decamp from Kadesh, as a necessary precaution in order to secure the safety of the people, he sent messengers to the king of Edom (upon whose borders they then were) requesting permission to pass through his territories, assuring him that they would not commit any hostilities, nor give the least molestation to any of his subjects. But the haughty Edomite was so far from granting his request, that

he came out with a powerful army to oppose him; upon which Moses, after decamping from Kadesh, took another way, and marched to Mount Hor, near the borders of Edom, where they pitched their tents, and for some time encamped.

The time now drawing near, that the Israelites were to penetrate the promised land, (into which the Lord had told Aaron he should not enter because of his transgression at Meribah) God gave Aaron notice that his dissolution was near at hand, that he might the more properly prepare himself for so awful an event. As a necessary introduction, the Almighty commanded Moses to take Aaron, and Eleazar his son, (who was to succeed him in the office of high-priest) and conduct them to the top of the mount, where he should strip Aaron of his priestly garments, and put them upon Eleazar, his son.

Moses having obeyed these commands, Aaron, in a very short time after, gave up the ghost §; and when the people heard that he was dead, they mourned for him thirty days.

C H A P. XI.

The Israelites are defeated by Arad one of the Canaanitish kings, but, on a second engagement, obtain a complete conquest. They murmur on account of their food. The Plague of fiery Serpents. Miraculously removed by a Brazen one set up by Moses. The Israelites defeat Sibon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Basban. Balak, king of Moab, fears the inroads of the Israelites. Sends Messengers to Balaam (a famous magician) to come and curse the Israelites. Balaam's journey, and behaviour on his arrival. His prophecies concerning the Israelites. Punishment of the Israelites for committing whoredom and idolatry. The impudence and punishment of Zimri. The Moabites and Midianites totally defeated by the Israelites, and the whole, except such females as were virgins, put to the sword. Moses appoints the limits of those parts of Canaan the Israelites were to conquer, and orders that the division of the country shall be made by lot. He appoints Joshua his successor in the government. Makes a remarkable speech to the people. Takes his farewell of them, and goes up to Pisgah to take a view of the promised land. His death and character.

WHILE the Israelites lay encamped near Mount Hor, Arad, one of the kings of Canaan, who dwelt in the south, being informed of their situation, and that they intended visiting his dominions, went out with a considerable army to interrupt their progress. Accordingly, coming up with them, an engagement took place, in which the Israelites were worsted, and some of them made prisoners.

In consequence of this repulse, the Israelites made a vow to God, promising, if he would deliver these people into their hands, they would utterly destroy their cities. Their Divine Protector was pleased to listen to their request; for, upon their engaging the Canaanites a second time, they obtained a complete victory, took possession

of their cities, and put all the inhabitants to the sword.

Elated with this success the Israelites decamped from Mount Hor, and took their rout by the Red Sea, marching round Edom, through which they had been refused a passage by the king of the country. As the way was long, the passes difficult, and the country barren, they, forgetting their late success, and reflecting only on the present inconveniences, relapsed into their old humour of murmuring, and heavily complained both against God and Moses. *Wherefore, said they, have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water, and our soul loatheth this light bread.*

As

§ He was buried on the spot where he died, it being the ancient custom to bury persons of eminence in high places. See Joshua xxiv. 30. Judges ii. 9. This event happened

in the 40th year after the Israelites left Egypt, on the first day of the fifth month, which answers to our July, at which time Aaron was 123 years of age. See Numb. xxxiii. 38 39.

As a punishment to the Israelites for this fresh instance of their impiety and distrust, God sent amongst them prodigious numbers of fiery serpents ¶, whose stings were so venomous, that those who were bit by them died; and by this plague, great numbers of the Israelites, in a very short space of time, were carried off.

This dreadful calamity so alarmed the people, that they flew to Moses for protection, acknowledging the offence they had committed, and beseeching him to intercede with God in their behalf. Moses, pitying their distress, readily complied with their request; upon which the Almighty was pleased to order him to make a serpent of brass resembling those by which they were afflicted, and to set it up on a high pole*; telling him, at the same time, that such as were bitten, if they looked up to this serpent, should be healed†.

Moses obeyed the Divine command, and though the serpents did not cease biting, that the people might be more sensible of their transgression, yet, on looking up to the brazen serpent, the force of the sting lost its effect, and the person afflicted soon recovered.

The Israelites, after making various marches and encampments, between the countries of Moab and Ammon, without committing the least hostility, at length came to the borders of that part of the country inhabited by the Amorites. From hence Moses sent ambassadors to Sihon their king, requesting permission to pass through his country, and promising, at the same time, not to commit any depredation, or give him the least disturbance.

The Amorite prince, fearful of admitting so formidable a body into the heart of his kingdom, positively denied the Israelites a passage; and thinking it better policy to attack than be attacked, gathered what force he could, and marched out to give them battle. They met near a place called Jahaz, when a desperate engagement ensued, in which the Amorites were totally defeated, and the whole body put to the sword. The Israelites pursuing their

conquests made themselves masters of the most considerable places belonging to the Amorites, particularly Heshbon‡, which, with the villages about it, Sihon had before taken from the Moabites.

From Heshbon the Israelites marched towards Bashan§ (taking several other places in their way belonging to the Amorites, particularly a large city called Jaazer) where the giant Og¶, another king of the Amorites, resided, and who, on the approach of the Israelites, drew out his gigantic troops in order to give them battle. Fearful lest the Israelites should be discouraged at the sight of this formidable army, Moses, by the command of God, bade them be of good spirits, and not entertain the least apprehensions of danger, for that God would deliver them into their hands, and they should make as easy a conquest over them as they had done over king Sihon.

Animated at this intelligence the Israelites marched with all expedition against the Amorites, whom they attacked with such success as to obtain a compleat victory, and not only the whole of the people, but likewise king Og and his sons, were put to the sword. They then seized on the principal parts of the country, and utterly destroyed the inhabitants, reserving only the cattle, and spoil of the cities, as they had done before in the case of Sihon.

Encouraged by these successes, the Israelites marched to the plains of Moab, and encamped on the bank of the river Jordan, nearly opposite to Jericho. The approach of these victorious strangers struck a terror among the people wherever they went, and the fame of their late success against the Amorites threw Balak the king of Moab, and all his people, into the most dreadful consternation.

Balak, knowing himself too weak to engage the mighty force of Israel himself, formed a strong alliance with his neighbours the Midianites, and a consultation was held between the heads of each, what steps should be taken to avoid

¶ The learned Bochart takes these serpents to have been of that kind which is called *hydrus* or *cherfydrus*, whose bite dries up the skin, and occasions a violent heat; whence the Hebrews call them *fiery*. The same author shews, that some species of them were flying serpents, of which the prophet Isaiah speaks, chap. xiv. 29. and xxx. 6. and that with such Arabia is said to be particularly infested. Accordingly, Herodotus tells us, that he had seen these winged, or flying serpents in Egypt, and that there were such prodigious numbers of them in Arabia, that if they were to increase according to the ordinary course of nature, the country would not be habitable. The authors of the Universal History tell us, that after they have coupled together, the female never fails to kill the male, and that the young ones kill her as soon as they are hatched.

* The word which we render a *pole* properly signifies a *banner* or *ensign*, erected with an intention that the people might gather unto it. Isaiah v. 26. xlix. 22.

† The healing virtue which accompanied the looking on this image was derived from God alone; who was pleased in this manner to display his power, to make the Israelites sensible that those serpents were sent by him, and that they had no reason to fear any evil whatsoever, provided they made God their friend, whose power could provide a remedy in all emergencies. Most interpreters observe a remarkable similitude between the virtue of this brazen serpent, erected on a pole, and that of Christ's death; and the same is taken notice of by our blessed Saviour himself; *As Moses lifted up*

the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life, John iii. 14, 16.—This brazen serpent remained among the Jews upwards of 700 years, till the time of Hezekiah, king of Judah, who, finding it become an object of idolatry, ordered it to be taken down and totally destroyed.

‡ Heshbon was situated about twenty miles to the east of the river Jordan. It was the capital city of the Amorites, and the seat of their king Sihon, which is thought to have been the name common to all the kings of the Amorites, as Pharaoh was to the kings of Egypt.

§ Bashan was a famous mountain lying more northerly than the country of Sihon, and belonging also to the Amorites. It is celebrated in Scripture for its rich pasture, excellent breed of cattle, and stately oaks. See Deut. xxxii. 14. Psal. xxii. 12. Ezek. xxvii. 6. It gave name to the whole country where Og reigned, and which was called by the Scythians *Bethana*, and by the Greeks *Batanea*.

¶ Og and Sihon were two conjunctive princes whom the Amorites had chosen to conduct their armies against the Israelites. Og was of the remnant of the giants, or Rephaim, who were a mighty people in this part of the country. Joshua xii. 4. Some judgment may be formed of the stature of this gigantic prince from the size of his bed, which, being made of iron for strength, was nine cubits in length, and four cubits in breadth: that is, English measure, thirteen feet and a half long, and six feet broad. See Deut. iii. 11.

avoid the common danger, and to secure themselves against these bold invaders.

The result of this consultation was, that messengers should be sent to Balaam, a noted magician, who lived at Pethor, a city of Mesopotamia, to invite him by bribes, to come to Moab, and, by cursing the Israelites, prevent their proving successful in that part of the country. In consequence of this determination a select number of the principal people both of Moab and Midian, were dispatched to Balaam with many valuable presents, and with orders that they should, if possible, bring him with them to Moab, that, by his enchantments and curses, he might destroy the power of the Israelites and thereby secure them from every kind of danger.

As soon as these deputies arrived at Pethor, they delivered their message to Balaam, who desired them to tarry with him that night, for that he could not give them any answer till he had consulted the Lord. The Almighty, knowing the secrets of Balaam's heart, asked, what men they were that were with him. To which he replied, "They are some whom the king of Moab hath sent to me, to let me know that there is a people come out of Egypt which cover the face of the earth; and to desire me to come to him, and curse them, in hopes that he then may be able to overcome them, and drive them away." To this God made answer, *Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed.*

Not daring to disobey the Divine command, Balaam arose early in the morning, and going to the deputies dismissed them, saying, "Be gone to your own country, for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you."

The deputies, on their return to Moab, misrepresented Balaam's answer to the king; for, instead of telling him, that God had refused to let him come, they told him that Balaam himself had refused to come. In consequence of this Balak, suggesting that either the number and quality of his messengers did not answer Balaam's ambition, or the value of the presents his covetousness, resolved, if possible, to remove this obstacle by gratifying both. He accordingly dispatched the chiefs of his nobility to Balaam, sending by them much more considerable presents than before, and at the same time this message: "Let nothing, said he, hinder thee from coming to me; for I will promote thee to very great honour, and give thee whatsoever thou shalt ask, if thou wilt but come and curse this people."

Balaam, being naturally of a very avaricious disposition, accepted the presents from the deputies, but evaded complying with their request, by assuring them that he durst not, on any account whatever, counteract the Divine will. However, in order to amuse and flatter them with expectations, he desired them to tarry a little, while he made farther enquiries of the Lord, and if he thought proper to admit his going he would readily attend them.

The Almighty had at first given Balaam a positive answer, and it was certainly the highest

disobedience and presumption to attempt the reversing it by a farther application. However, blinded by covetousness and ambition, he again addressed himself to God, who, (provoked at his obstinacy and presumption) was pleased to give him this answer: *If the men, said he, come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do.*

With this permission Balaam arose in the morning, and, saddling his ass, set forward with the messengers on their journey to Moab. On the road he was met by an angel, with a drawn sword in his hand, whom, though he perceived not, his ass plainly saw, and, being startled, turned aside in order to avoid him. With some difficulty Balaam beat his ass into the road again, soon after which the angel placed himself in a narrow passage between two walls which enclosed a vineyard. The ass, who was equally startled as before, not knowing how to avoid the angel, ran against one of the walls, and crushed Balaam's foot; upon which he was so provoked that he beat him with great severity. At length the angel removed, and fixed himself in a place so very narrow that there was no possibility of passing him; upon which the ass made a full stop, and fell beneath his rider. This enraged Balaam still more; and as he was beating the poor animal in the most unmerciful manner, God was pleased to give the ass the faculty of speech, who expostulated with his master on his severe treatment in words to this effect: "What, said he, have I done to thee, that thou shouldest beat me these three times?" Because, said Balaam, thou hast deserved it in mocking me: had I a sword in my hand I would kill thee." The ass replied, "Am I not thine ass, upon which thou hast been accustomed to ride ever since I was thine; did I ever serve thee so before?"

While Balaam was thus conversing with his ass, God was pleased to open his eyes, and let him see the angel standing in the way with a naked sword in his hand. Terrified at so unexpected a sight, Balaam fell on his face, acknowledged his offence, asked pardon for it, and offered, if his journey was displeasing to God, immediately to return.

That his journey was displeasing to the Almighty he certainly could not be ignorant, because, in his first address, God had expressly interdicted his going. He was pleased, however, to suffer him to proceed, that some kind of advantage might be raised out of this man's wickedness, and to make him, who was hired to curse, the instrument of pronouncing a blessing on his people.

When Balak heard that Balaam was on the road, he went himself to receive him on the confines of his dominions. As soon as Balak saw him he, in a friendly manner, blamed him for not coming at his first sending, which Balaam excused on account of the restraint that had been laid upon him by the Almighty. Balak then conducted him to his capital, where he that day publicly entertained him in the most sumptuous manner; and the next morning conducted him to the high places consecrated to the idol Baal*,

from

* The word Baal signifies lord, and was the name of se-

veral idols, both male and female. The idol of the Moabites

from whence he might take an advantageous view of the camp of the Israelites.

After being here some short time, Balaam ordered seven altars to be erected, and seven oxen, together with the like number of rams, to be prepared for sacrifice. Balaam, having offered an ox and a ram on each altar, left Balak to stand by the sacrifices, whilst himself withdrew at some distance to consult the Lord. On his return, he addressed the king, in the presence of the whole company, in words to this effect: "Thou hast caused me, O king, said he, to come from out of the mountains of the east to curse the family of Jacob, and bid defiance to Israel. But how shall I curse those whom God hath not cursed? and how shall I defy those whom the Lord hath not defied? From the top of the rocks I see their projector, and from the hills I behold him. Behold, this people shall be separated to God, and distinguished from all other people in religion, laws and course of life: they shall not be reckoned among the nations." He then set forth the great prosperity and increase of the Israelites, and concluded by wishing that his lot, both in life and in death, might be like unto theirs. *Let me die, said he, the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.*

Balak, alarmed, as well as incensed, at these words, which were quite contrary to what he had expected, passionately said to Balaam, "What hast thou done? I sent for thee to curse mine enemies, but, instead thereof, thou hast blessed them." Balaam excused himself by urging the necessity of his instructions, from which, he said, it was not in his power at that time to make the least deviation.

Not discouraged at this rebuff Balak, thinking that a change of place might produce a change of fortune, or better success, conducted Balaam to the top of Mount Pisgah, in order to try whether, from thence, he could fulfil his wishes, by cursing the Israelites.

Balaam, willing to please the king, had seven other altars erected here, and a bullock and ram offered on each. As soon as the sacrifices were ready he withdrew, as before, to consult the Lord, from whom he received fresh instructions. On his return to Balak and his attendants, the king, big with expectation of the result, asked what the Lord had spoken. Balaam, with the most serious countenance, and solemn tone of voice, answered as follows: "Consider, said he, O Balak, thou son of Zippor, Consider, that God, who hath already blessed Israel, and forbidden me to curse them, is not like a man that he should renounce his promise, or repent of what he does. Hath he promised, and shall he not perform? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commission to bless, and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. He does not approve of afflictions, or outrages against the posterity of Jacob, nor of vexation or trouble

against the posterity of Israel. The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is in him! God hath brought them out of Egypt: he hath, as it were, the strength of an unicorn. Surely no enchantment can prevail against Jacob; nor any divination against Israel. So that, considering what God will work this time for the deliverance of his people, all the world shall wonder and say, What hath God wrought? Who hath put his people out of the reach of fraud or force, and turned the intended curse into a blessing? And to shew their future strength and success, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift themselves up as a young lion. They shall not lie down until they eat of the prey, and drink of the blood of the slain."

Balak was so mortified at this speech that, in the height of his passion, he forbade Balaam either to bless or curse; but, after his indignation was somewhat abated, he changed his mind, and desired him to make a farther trial at another place. Accordingly, Balaam was conducted to the top of Mount Peor, where fresh altars were raised, and fresh sacrifices offered; but all to no purpose. Balaam well knew the positive will of God, in this case, was, to bless, and not to curse. He did not, therefore, as before, retire for farther instructions, but, casting his eyes on the tents of the Israelites, thus exclaimed, *How good are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!* He then, in proper and significant metaphors, foretold their extent, fertility and strength, and that "those that blessed them should be blessed, and those that cursed them should be cursed."

Balak, enraged to hear Balaam, whom he had sent for to curse the Israelites, thus three times successively bless them, could no longer contain himself, but clasping his hands together, bade him haste and be gone, since, by his folly, he had both abused God, and defrauded himself. "I thought, said he, to have promoted thee to great honour, if thou hadst answered my design in cursing Israel; but the Lord hath hindered thy preferment."

Balaam, in excuse, made use of the same arguments he had done before, namely, that he could not run counter to the Divine commands, but must speak what the Lord had put into his mouth. He then, in expectation of obtaining some reward from the king, notwithstanding he had not answered the purposes for which he was sent, offered to advertise him of what the Israelites would do to his people in subsequent ages; which being accepted by Balak, he prophesied as follows: "That a star should come forth from Jacob, and a rod from Israel; that it should smite the chiefs of Moab, and destroy the children of Seth; that Edom should fall under its power; that the Amalekites should be totally destroyed, and the Kenites† made captives."

Having

Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, is called in Exod. iii. 1. abites was named *Chemosh*, and, like those of other nations, was worshipped in high places, which were generally planted with groves. It was thought necessary, in all solemn imprecations, to have the persons devoted present to the view

of him who pronounced the anathema: for which reason Balak conducted Balaam to these high places, that he might have a full view of the camp of Israel.

† Various are the opinions of commentators who these Kenites were; but the most probable opinion of them is this,

Having said this Balaam left the king, but without receiving any reward, as he had expected, for his predictions. Vexed at this disappointment, and considering the Israelites as the occasion of it, he determined to wreak his vengeance on them. He knew that their prosperity depended on their strict observance of the Divine laws, and that there was no way to bring a curse on them, but by seducing them from their duty. To accomplish, therefore, his wicked design, he advised both the Moabites and Midianites to send their daughters into the camp of the Israelites, that they might first entice the people into lewdness, and then into idolatry; by doing of which they would infallibly be deprived of that divine assistance that had hitherto protected them †.

This wicked stratagem being highly approved of by the Moabites and Midianites, was immediately put into execution, and in some measure attended with the wished for success. Many of the Israelites were deluded by these strange women, not only to commit whoredom with them, but also idolatry, by assisting at their sacrifices, and worshipping their gods, even their god Baal-peor §.

These offences were highly displeasing to God, who, as a punishment on the people, commanded Moses to take the chiefs of those who had worshipped Baal-peor, and hang them up in the sight of the people, without paying respect either to friendship or kindred. This was accordingly done, and the number that suffered were about one thousand. But the Divine justice did not stop here, for those who had committed whoredom were visited with a dreadful plague, which,

in a short time, carried off no less than twenty-four thousand persons ||.

These severe punishments opened the eyes of the sinful Israelites, who assembled at the door of the tabernacle, and, with the most expressive sense of affliction, bewailed their folly and wickedness, in suffering themselves to have been deluded by a strange people, who were their mortal enemies.

While the whole congregation were thus situated at the door of the tabernacle, they were surprized with an instance of the most unparalleled boldness and depravity in one of the chiefs of the tribe of Simeon, named Zimri*, who in the sight of Moses, and all the people, brought with him a young Midianitish princess, named Cozbi, into the camp, and, with all the actions of gallantry, conducted her to his tent.

This impious as well as insolent behaviour particularly engaged the attention of Phineas, the son of Eleazar the high-priest, who, fired with a just indignation, suddenly arose, and taking a javelin in his hand, ran to Zimri's tent, where, finding them in the most indecent situation, he put a period to their lives, by running them both through the body at the same instant.

After this zealous act of Phineas the plague, which God had sent among the people for their lewdness and impiety, ceased. And Phineas not only received the highest commendation for his conduct among the people, but also from God, who was pleased to appoint a perpetual settlement of the priesthood on him and his posterity.—Thus, as St. Ambrose says, were the Jews more

the priest of Midian; and in Judges i. 16. the Kenite. From whence we may infer, that the Midianites and Kenites were some of the tribes of Midian.

† Josephus, after mentioning the particulars that took place between Balaam and Balak, from his arrival at Moab, to his departure, tells us, that when he had got to the river Euphrates he bethought himself of this project, and having sent for Balak, and the princes of Midian, he thus addressed them: “To the end, says he, that king Balak, and you the princes of Midian, may know the great desire I have to please you, I have thought of an expedient, that may, perhaps, prove serviceable. Never flatter yourselves that the Hebrews are to be destroyed by wars, pestilence, famine, or any other of those common calamities; for they are so secure under God's special Providence, that they are never totally to be extinguished by any of these depopulating judgments: But, if any small and temporary advantage against them will give you any satisfaction, hearken to my advice. Send into their camp a number of the most beautiful women you can select; and, to improve nature, dress them up with all the ornaments of art, and direct them in what manner to behave themselves upon all occasions of courtship and amour. If the young men shall make love, and proceed to any importunities, let them threaten immediately to be gone, unless they will actually renounce the laws of their country, and the honour of that God who prescribed them, and finally engage themselves to worship after the manner of the Midianites and Moabites. This, says he, will provoke God, and draw down vengeance on their heads”

§ This idol is supposed to have been like that called Priapus, the idol of Turpitude among the Greeks and Romans; and that the worship of it consisted in the most gross obscenity and impurity. With respect to its name, it is probable, that Peor was a mountain in the country of Moab, and that on it stood the temple of Baal; from whence the idol was called Baal-peor.

|| There is no doubt but that Moses, in this number, includes the thousand chiefs who were hanged for their idolatry.

This is a very natural supposition, and easily reconciles the passage here with that mentioned by St. Paul (1 Cor. x. 8.) where he only rates the number at 23000. The apostle, therefore, it is plainly evident, only takes notice of those who died by the pestilence, and excludes those who were hanged.

* Josephus tells us, that when Moses found this defection in the people, he assembled them together, and, in very severe terms, admonished them for their conduct. Zimri, who was naturally of a haughty and tenacious disposition, thinking himself particularly pointed at, addressed Moses as follows: “You are at liberty, (says he) to use your own laws: they have been a long time in exercise, and custom is all that can be said for their strength or credit. Were it not for this you would, to your cost, have found, long since, that the Hebrews are not to be imposed upon; and I myself am one of the number that never will truckle to your tyrannical oppression. For what's your business all this while, but, under a bare pretext, and talk of laws and God, to bar us not only from the exercise but the very desire of liberty? What are we the better for coming out of Egypt, if it be only to exchange for a more grievous bondage under Moses? You are to make here what laws you please, and we to abide by the penalties of them, when, at the same time, 'tis you only that deserve to be punished for abolishing such customs as are authorized by the common consent of nations, and setting up your own will and fancy against general practice and reason. For my own part, what I have done, I take to be well done, and shall make no difficulty to confess and justify it. I have, it is true, married a strange woman. I speak this with the liberty of an honest man, and I care not who knows it. I never meant to make a secret of it, and you need look no farther for an informer. I do acknowledge, too, that I have changed my way of worship, and reckon it very reasonable for a man to examine all things that would find out the truth, without being tied up (as if it were in a despotic government) to the opinion and humour of one single man.”

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



PHINEHAS *killing* **ZIMRI** and **COZBI**,
for committing Whoredom & Idolatry.

more miraculously delivered by one true priest, than they had before been corrupted by one false prophet; and the zeal and piety of the one was of greater force than the avarice or artifices of the other. We here find that the people of God are happy when they have persons amongst them who, by a wise zeal, oppose the designs of those who would corrupt them. There will be always Balaams in the church, that is, false prophets, who seek their own worldly interests, and not those of Jesus Christ. Wherefore it is greatly to be wished that the church may not want such as Phineas, who was sensible of the least injury that threatened it, and who aimed at nothing but the Glory of God, and the salvation of his people.

The disorders among the Israelites being thoroughly quelled, and the offenders punished, Moses, by the direction of God, proceeded to take vengeance on the Midianites, who, by their conduct, had been the authors of the late calamities among the people. He ordered a detachment to be made out of 12000 choice men, a thousand out of each tribe, whom he sent against the Midianites. Among them was the zealous Phineas, who took with him the ark, together with the sacred trumpets, the latter of which were to be blown, during the time of action, to animate the people.

The army of the Israelites was but small compared with the great numbers they had to oppose; but God, who put them on the expedition, was pleased to crown their attempts with such success, that conquest took place wherever they went. They vanquished five kings, whom, with their men, they put all to the sword. Among the slain was the wicked prophet Balaam †, who, though he had before escaped the sword of the angel, could not now avoid the common danger, but fell a victim to his own baseness.

In every city where the Israelites made a conquest, they destroyed not only the fortified places but likewise all the buildings, took all the women and children prisoners, and seized on their cattle, flocks and goods.

The Israelites, having thus vanquished their enemies, and loaded themselves with the spoils of conquest, returned in triumph to the camp, where they were met by Moses, Eleazar the

high-priest, and all the elders of the different tribes, who congratulated them on the occasion, and the people testified their joy by the loudest acclamations.

But when Moses saw the women captives, remembering what damage they had done by alluring the Israelites into idolatry, he thought it unsafe that their lives should be spared. He therefore ordered that all those who had ever known man, together with all the male children, should be put to the sword, and none but virgins be saved alive. These orders were accordingly executed, and (as a proof of the importance of the victory) the number of virgin-captives amounted to two and thirty thousand.

After this Moses gave orders that the conquerors should abide seven days without the camp, and that both the soldiers and spoils should pass through the ceremonies of a legal purification ‡.

When the time of purification was expired, Moses, by the command of God, took an account of the whole booty that had been taken from the Midianites. This he divided into two equal parts, one of which he gave to the soldiers who had taken it, and the other half to the rest of the people who stayed at home. Out of the division given to the soldiers he ordered a five hundredth part to be paid as a tribute to Eleazar the high-priest, as an heave-offering to the Lord; and out of the other part allotted to the people, a fiftieth, both of persons and beasts, to be given to the Levites.

The plunder of cattle and flocks consisted of 670,500 sheep, 72,000 oxen, and 61,000 asses, besides a great quantity of rich goods and ornaments. And, what makes the victory still more miraculous is, that not one man among the Israelites was slain in the battle, as appeared from the report afterwards made on a general muster of the whole that went out to war.

The officers of the army were sensible that, in saving the Midianitish women, they had committed a great transgression. They therefore presented a prodigious quantity of jewels, and other rich spoils, both as an expiatory offering to atone for their offence, and in gratitude to God's goodness for having giving them so great and signal a victory.

The

† It is evident, from this circumstance, that if Balaam did return to his own country when he left Balak, he did not continue long there; but it is much more probable that he never did return, but dwelt with the princes of Midian, in order to give them counsel.

‡ The whole army were to stay without the camp seven days; and such of them as had stained their hands in blood, or touched a dead body, were to purify themselves by the water of separation. For though it was lawful to kill men in a just war; yet because of the common affinity which subsists between all mankind, and to preserve sentiments of humanity, it was thought fit and decent to oblige all who had shed blood, as well as those who had touched the slain, to undergo a purification, before they were admitted to free conversation and public worship. It appears to have been a very antient custom amongst most nations, to appoint certain purifications in all such cases, in order, no doubt, to inspire an uncommon dread and horror of bloodshed. On these occasions it was usual, particularly, to wash their hands in water, for the purification of the defilement. Thus Homer makes Hector declare himself unfit for performing any offices of Divine worship before he was purified:

Ill fits it me, with human gore distain'd,
To the pure skies these horrid hands to raise,
Or offer heav'n's great fire polluted praise.

POPE, Iliad vi.

And Virgil makes Æneas say the same thing:

These hands, yet horrid with the stains of war,
Refrain their touch unhallow'd, till the day
When the pure stream shall wash their guilt away.

PURR, Æn. ii.

It was upon this account that the *man-slayer*, who had involuntarily shed blood, was forced to fly his country, and repair to one of the cities of refuge, Numbers xxxv. 6. For the same reason David was not allowed to build the temple of God, because he had been a man of war, and had shed much blood. 1 Chron. xxviii. 4. For though it be lawful (says Philo) to put our enemies to death, yet, whoever sheds the blood of a fellow-creature, though justly, is believed to have contracted some defilement, on account of that common relation which is between all mankind, who have the same original.

The Israelites were now in possession of all that part of the country which lay on the east side of the river Jordan. It was a very fertile spot, and stored with good pasturage, in consequence of which the tribes of Reuben and Gad, together with the half tribe of Manasseh, requested of Moses that they might be permitted to settle there, it being particularly commodious for the feeding their flocks and cattle.

Moses, thinking this request arose from their pusillanimity, and that they were desirous of continuing in a country ready gained, and thereby avoid giving their assistance in farther conquests, was exceeding angry, and blamed them for offering a proposal so discouraging to the rest of the tribes. They told him they had no other reason for wishing to continue where they were than what they had already advanced, and that though they were desirous of settling there with their families, yet they wished not to decline the fatigues of war. They promised, in the most solemn manner, that a quota should go with the army into the land of Canaan, and contribute all the assistance they were able in reducing that country which had been so long promised, and that when these matters were accomplished, and not till then, would they desire to return to their families in the plains of Moab. On this reason, and on these promises, Moses told them their request should be granted.

As the Israelites were now in the neighbourhood of Canaan, and the time very near of their entering that country to take possession of it, Moses called a general assembly of the people, to whom he enumerated the several stations and removes they had made from the time of their leaving the land of Goshen in Egypt, till their arrival in the plains of Moab. He then, by the direction of God, pointed out the limits of what they were to conquer, and appointed the distribution of the whole among the different tribes to be by lot, assigning the chief management of it to Eleazar the high-priest, and Joshua, the general of his army.

In the division of the country Moses assigned forty-eight cities, together with their suburbs, to be inhabited by the Levites, and withal ordered, that six of them should be made *cities of refuge*, whither the *innocent* manslayer, who had killed his neighbour by chance, might betake himself, and where he should remain in safety till the death of the high-priest, when he was at full liberty to go where he pleased with equal safety as when in the city of refuge. At the same time Moses made all proper provision that the *wilful* murderer should certainly be put to death. But in this, and all other capital cases, he made it a law that none should be convicted upon the evidence of any single person. A law was likewise made, that every daughter who should possess an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel should be married to one of the tribes of his father, that so the Israelites might every one enjoy the inheritance of his father; and the inheritance not to be transferred to another tribe. This was grounded on a law made before, which empowered daughters to inherit land where the heirs male should be deficient; and was the case of the daughters of Zelophehad, (a descendant of Manasseh the son of Joseph) who, by this

additional law, were required to marry within the family of their father's tribe.

The forty years travels of the Israelites being now nearly expired, Moses, considering that the then generation were either sprung up since the law was given at Mount Sinai, or too young to remember and understand it, thought proper to repeat the whole to them, that they might not be deficient in performing those duties so religiously enjoined. Accordingly, on the first day of the eleventh month, and in the fortieth year from their departure out of Egypt (being then encamped on the plains of Moab, by the banks of the river Jordan) Moses called all the people together, to whom he briefly related all that had befallen their fathers since the time of their leaving Egypt; the gracious dealings of God with them; their continual murmurings and rebellions against him; and the many severe judgments that followed thereupon, even to his own exclusion from the promised land. He then gave them a summary of all the laws which the Divine goodness had calculated for their happiness; and, after repeating the Decalogue almost word for word, he reminded them of the solemn and dreadful manner in which it was delivered from Mount Sinai, and of the manifold obligations they lay under to a strict observance of it. He encouraged them to be faithful to God, by assuring them that, if they kept his commandments, they should not fail of having innumerable blessings heaped on them; but at the same time he threatened them with all manner of calamities if they departed from them. He then, in the name of the Lord, renewed the covenant which their fathers had made with God at Mount Horeb; commanded them to proclaim, on the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, beyond Jordan, blessings on such as observed the Covenant, and curses on those who broke it: and to erect an altar there, on which should be written, in legible characters, the terms and conditions of the Covenant.

These, and several other Directions relative to their future conduct in the land of Canaan, did Moses not only deliver to the people by word of mouth, but likewise ordered them to be written in a book, which he committed to the care and custody of the Levites, who, by God's appointment laid it up on the side of the ark, there to remain a witness against the people should they afterwards rebel.

Such was the care and concern of Moses for the future welfare of the people: and that they might never want a proper fund of devotion, he composed a song, or poem which he not only repeated to them, but likewise gave orders that they should all learn by heart. In this song he expressed, in a very elegant manner, the many benefits which God had bestowed on his people; their ingratitude and forgetfulness of him, the punishment wherewith he had afflicted them; and the threats of greater judgments, if they persisted in provoking him by a repetition of their follies. —The whole of this beautiful song runs from the first verse of the xxxii chap. of Deut. to the xlii.

The time was now near at hand when a period was to be put to Moses's earthly peripatations. The Almighty had before told him, that he should not conduct the people into the promised land

land because of his error at the waters of Meribah: he therefore now commanded him to go up to the mountains of Abarim^s, and there take a view of the land of Canaan, which he had promised to his fore-father's Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and farther told him, that after he had so done, he should die there, as his brother Aaron had done on Mount Hor.

Moses humbly submitted to the will of the Almighty, and, as a necessary preparation to the execution of this last command, took a solemn farewell[¶] of the people, bestowing a prophetic blessing on each tribe, in like manner as Jacob had done a short time previous to his death.

The Almighty had before appointed Joshua to succeed Moses in his commission; and to prevent any disputes after his death, Moses first laid his own hands upon Joshua, and then presented him to Eleazar the high-priest, who, in a solemn form of admission, and in the presence of all the people, accepted him as leader and general of the Israelites; after which Moses gave Joshua some instructions relative to his office, and one more especially which concerned his consulting God, by way of Urim and Thummim, on matters of emergency.

Having adjusted these matters, Moses, in conformity to the Divine command, retired to Pisgah, the most elevated situation on Mount Nebo, directly opposite to Jericho, from whence he might take a full view of the country, which God had promised to Abraham's posterity. At this time he was an hundred and twenty years of age, notwithstanding which his natural strength and vigour were not abated, nor had his eye sight in the least failed him. He was, therefore, able to survey the beauteous prospect which the delightful plains of Jericho, and the fair

cliffs and lofty cedars of Lebanon, afforded him; and having done this for some time, he at length resigned his soul into the hands of Seraphims, who were waiting to convey it to a more happy Canaan than that which he had been surveying.

The Almighty was pleased to pay the funeral honours to the remains of this great prophet himself, by burying him in a valley in the land of Moab opposite to Beth Peor, and that in so secret a manner, that the place of his interment was never yet discovered.

Thus died the illustrious and pious Moses, the most eminent servant of God, and the great conductor of his chosen people, who, as soon as they knew of his death, lamented the loss of him with the greatest solemnity, weeping and mourning for him in the plains of Moab for thirty days^{||}.

As the place of his interment was not known, so no public monument could be erected on the spot to his memory; but, that no particle of his greatness might be lost, his successor Joshua, (who, no doubt, was the author of the last chapter of Deuteronomy) has there given him an honourable epitaph, which may be thus paraphrased:—See Deut. xxxiv. 10. 11. 12.

What prophet by the sacred breath inspir'd,
What friend of God with holy raptures fir'd,
Whose deathless name can equal glories share,
Or with God's servant Moses can compare?
With mortal eyes th' Invisible he saw,
On trembling Sinai's top receiv'd the law:
From Egypt's fetters ransom'd Israel brought,
And in their sight great signs and wonders wrought.

The

§ These mountains were situated in the country of the Moabites, between the two rivers Arnon and Jordan, and commanded a most extensive prospect of the land of Canaan. One part of these mountains was distinguished by the name of Nebo, as appears from Deut. xxxii. 49. but if we compare this with Deut. xxxiv. 1. we shall find that Nebo and Pisgah were one and the same mountain. If, therefore, there was any distinction between the names it was probably this, that the top of the mountain was more peculiarly called Pisgah, which signifies to *elevate*, or *raise up*, and, therefore, may very properly denote the *top*, or *summit*, of any mountain. Not far from Nebo was Beth-peor, which was probably so called from some deity of that name worshipped by the Moabites.

¶ The words Josephus puts into the mouth of Moses, on this occasion, are as follow: "Since (says he) it is the will of God to call me to my Fathers, and so to order it, that this very day is to be the last of my life, it becomes me, while yet living, and in your presence, to return him thanks for all his cares and Providences extended to you and your affairs; not only in your deliverances from all manner of calamities, but in the bounty of innumerable blessings and benefits; and I must likewise acknowledge his infinite goodness to myself, in prospering all my endeavours for your comfort and advantage, wherein my part hath been only subservient to your well-being, while God himself was the first mover and perfecter of it: for all which providences his holy name be praised; and to his gracious protection, now, as a dying man, I reckon it a duty to recommend you. I must remind you, likewise, of the honour and veneration you owe to that Almighty power, which alone, and no other, you are to worship and adore. And I pray ye have a care to put a true value also upon the laws he hath given you, as the most sacred and inestimable of all his bounties. Make it the case but of a common law-giver to have his ordinances trampled on, and his authority despised, how unpardonable an affront would this be even from one man to another?"

"But who shall stand against the indignation of an incensed God then, who is your Divine Law-giver, when he shall be provoked to call you to an account for the contempt of his commandments?"

|| Thus far the Sacred History (the last chapter of Deuteronomy excepted) was of Moses's inditing, which contains the five first books of the Bible, and is thence called the Pentateuch. All antiquity, both sacred and profane, acknowledge Moses to have been the legislator of the Jews; and that whole nation had always carefully preserved his Books as containing their law.

As to the truth of his history, we have several proofs.

1. It is the most antient history in the world; for whether Moses was co-temporary with Inachus the first king of Argos, who lived six hundred years before the war of Cecrops, king of Athens, or not, it is certain he was much older than Homer, or Hesiod, or any profane writer.

2. Moses was the only person that had given a plain historical account of the origin of the world, and who had continued that history uniform, and without any interruption, to his own time. All that others have written of the first ages was, as they owned themselves, mere ignorance, darkness and fable.

3. We have nothing in antient history, to prove that the world is older than Moses represents it. Fables invented for the poets have been exploded even by heathen authors.

5. His history agrees with the profane historians of different nations, and their antient names, which many of them have preserved. But if religion did not convince us, that the books of Moses were written by Divine inspiration, yet reason ought to persuade us, that this history of Moses is true, and the only one wherein we can find when the world began, and how long it has lasted.

As to the last chapter of Deuteronomy, it was certainly written by Joshua as a preparation to his own history, it being unreasonable to suppose that Moses could go so far as to give an account of his own death.

The character of Moses has been delineated by a variety of inspired, as well as prophane, writers, all of whom acknowledge him to have been the most excellent legislator and historian ever known. The instances of his conduct related through the course of his history sufficiently convince us of the truth of this assertion, and that he was a most profound philosopher, a skilful general, an eminent prophet, and a faithful guardian of the people.

Moses, was, from his infancy, brought up in a court, where he received all the advantages of a royal education, becoming the son and intended heir of a king. He was well skilled in Egyptian learning, conversing at court till he was forty years old, at which time, being divinely inspired, he withdrew, and chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of a courtly and sinful life. Being forced to fly to Midian, he undertook the poor employment of feeding sheep, during which God appeared to him in a bush, and commissioned him to be ruler and leader of his people. In this character he displayed an admirable conduct and œconomy, leading an almost innumerable multitude of people through a horrid desert for forty years. They often disobliged him by their mutinous and ungrateful behaviour, yet, like a true father of his country, he forgave them, and always interposed between them and their offended God, who, but for him, had often revenged himself upon them, and was with difficulty dissuaded from utterly extirpating them and their name, and raising another nation to Moses in their stead.

But if we enquire more particularly into the abilities and virtues of this excellent person, we shall find him the greatest and most honoured mortal that ever was born, till the son of God condescended to bless the world in human shape. He was a prophet, prince and poet. For the first we have his own acknowledgment: "The Lord thy God shall raise up unto thee a prophet like unto me, from among thy brethren," Deut. xviii. 15. For the second, God himself invested him with imperial power, when he gave him commission to deliver and govern his people, Exod. iii. 10. That he was a poet appears not only from the song, or hymn, which he wrote a short time before his death, but also from those eleven psalms ascribed to him, namely, from the 90th to the 100th, both inclusive.

Besides the many personal favours God bestowed upon this great man, he was pleased to honour him with this particular mark of distinction, that he was the most faithful of his servants, to whom he would communicate his will by express words, Numb. xii. 7. 8. And, indeed, if we consider the frequent interviews between God and Moses, the conveyance of the law by him, and his daily conversing and pleading for the people in the Tabernacle, where God more immediately revealed himself to him, we may justly call him the Secretary of the Divine Wisdom, by whose prayers, more than by Joshua's valour, the Amalekites were subdued.

Whoever examines into the administration of this great man will find in it the most refined polity and exact œconomy that ever adorned the

character of the most illustrious legislator. He had to manage a most obstinate, rebellious and ungrateful people, whom he governed with that dexterity that he always brought them to a sense of their duty. But in the discharge of this part of his high office, his love and care of their safety more eminently appeared than all his other perfections, not only in that heat of zeal when he begged of God rather to deprive him of the enjoyment of the promised land, than deny it to his people; but in those pressing instances and fervid admonitions throughout the whole Book of Deuteronomy, in which he calls God and man, heaven and earth to witness, that he may incline their hearts to a strict and sacred observance of the law of God.

Nor was his humility the least embellishment of his character. Though the Israelites had often provoked him by their clamours, reproaches and apostacy, and sometimes even threatened to stone him, unmoved he beheld their ingratitude, and instead of revenging himself by threats and punishments, humbly addressed himself to God in their behalf, to deprecate the judgments they deserved. And for this virtue God himself expressly distinguishes him with this eulogy, *that he was the meekest man upon earth.*

The death of this illustrious prophet and prince was as wonderful as the great transactions of his life; for, (as we have already observed) God himself was pleased to pay him the funeral honours, and to inter him with such privacy that no man ever knew where his sepulchre was.

The commendation, which the author of Ecclesiasticus gives Moses is expressed in these words: "Moses, says he, was beloved of God and men, and his memorial is blessed. The Lord made him like to the glorious saints, and magnified him so, that his enemies stood in fear of him: by his word he caused the wonders to cease, and he made him glorious in the sight of kings, gave him ordinances for his people, and shewed him part of his glory. He sanctified him in his faithfulness and meekness, and chose him out of all men. He made him to hear his voice, and brought him into the dark cloud, and gave him commandments before his face, even the law of life and knowledge, that he might teach Jacob his Covenant, and Israel his Judgments." Chap. xlv. 1—5.

The character Josephus gives Moses is as follows: "He was (says he) a man of admirable wisdom, and one that made the best use of what he understood: An excellent speaker, and no man better skilled in moving the affections of the people than himself: and so great a master was he of his passions, that he lived as though he had none, or as if he only knew them by their names, or by observing them in others. Never was there a greater captain, nor a prophet equal to him: for all his words were oracles." So true is the character which the sacred writer has given him: *There arose not a prophet in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face: In all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of Israel.*

Israel. "Nor was he less famous to posterity for his writings, than he was to the age he lived in for his actions."

The apostle St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, speaks of Moses as follows: "By faith (says he) Moses, when he was come to age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer adversity with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the king's displeasure. Through faith he instituted the passover and effusion of blood; lest he that slew the first-born should touch them. By faith he passed through the Red Sea as on dry land, which when the Egyptians attempted to do, they were swallowed up."

St. Stephen, the Protomartyr, in speaking of Moses, says thus: "Moses was mighty in word and deed; to whom, in the wilderness of mount Sinai, an angel appeared in a flame of fire in a bush. Him God sent for a prince and a deliverer of the people, by rescuing them from a servile state of bondage, which he accomplished after doing wonders and miracles in the land of Egypt. This is he that was in the congregation (the church) in the wilderness and conversed with our fathers, who received the lively oracles to give unto us."

The Fathers, and later writers, speak in commendation of Moses with the utmost respect and reverence. Justin Martyr, in his Parænesis to the Gentiles, says, that when Pythagoras, Plato, and others, were in Egypt, they altered their minds concerning Polytheism, being instructed by the Egyptians, (who had it from Moses) that there was but one God, who, in the beginning, created heaven and earth. He likewise affirms, that Plato learned from Moses the Being of a God, the Creator of things, the Divine word, the resurrection of the body, the judgment and punishment of the wicked, and the reward of the just.

The character St. Augustin gives of Moses is short, but at the same time very expressive: "He was (says he) the most faithful servant of God; humble in wishing to decline so weighty a ministry, but dutiful in undertaking it; just in keeping, and resolute in executing it; vigilant in government; strict in justice; jealous in love, and patient in suffering."

Constantine the Great, in his Oration, thus elegantly sets forth the worth and dignity of Moses: "Who (says he) can say enough in honour of him, who removed a people out of the greatest confusion, and placed them in the most exact order? Who, by gentle persuasions, quieted their mutinous spirits, and from a most servile condition brought them to the enjoyment of liberty. Who, in wisdom, so far excelled all that were superior to him in years, that he became the standard of knowledge both in his own and succeeding times, and a bright example of moral virtue to heathens as well as Hebrews, especially to Pythagoras and Plato, who were zealous emulators of his continency."

The character given of Moses by St. Ambrose is as follows: "Moses, says he, was the Figure of that Preceptor that was to come, who should preach the Gospel, fulfil the Old Testament, build the New, and feed the people with celestial aliment. Hence the dignity of the human condition is so highly advanced, that he is called by the name of God, *I have made thee a god to Pharaoh.* Exod. vii. 1. that is, I have given thee authority to speak to him in my name. And, indeed, he became his character; for he was master of his passions, not inclined to worldly desires, but in mind and body endeavoured to conduct himself after the likeness of that perfection of his God, as far as nature would permit. And, therefore, we read quite differently of him, to what we do of others who die through some defect of nature. With him it was otherwise, for, notwithstanding his great age, he retained the use of all his faculties to the last, his eyes not failing, nor his natural force abated; but died according to the word of the Lord."

The principal transactions of Moses's life, like those of Joseph's, bear a strong similarity (though in a lesser degree) to the occurrences that happened to Our Saviour during his earthly peregrinations, as will appear from the following comparison:

MOSES.

CHRIST.

Moses enlightened the Jews under the dispensation of the Old Law.

Christ enlightened the Christians under the Gospel.

Moses was legislator of the Pentateuch.

Christ of the Gospel.

Moses had two interviews with God; the first when he received the first tables from God in Mount Sinai; the other when he received the second tables, at which time he returned with his face shining.

Christ was honoured with the same testimony by his Father; first, at his Baptism, when the Holy Ghost descended upon him, and a voice was heard, saying, "This is my Beloved Son." The second was at his Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, when Moses and Elias (that is, the law and the Prophets) testified of him.

Moses did great wonders in the land of Egypt.

Christ did great miracles in Judea.

Moses spoke to God in a cloud.

Christ saw him face to face.

God told Moses he had found favour in his sight.

To Christ he said, "Thou art my Son."

But to pursue this Comparison more regularly, we shall follow the method of Eusebius.

Moses was legislator of the Jewish nation.

Christ was legislator of the whole world.

Moses purged the Israelites from their idolatry.

Christ purged the people wherever he went.

Moses, by signs and wonders, gave the law.

Christ, by the same means, confirmed the Gospel.

Moses delivered his people from bondage.

Christ set the whole world at liberty.

Moses promised the Israelites a land flowing with milk and honey.

Christ provided a kingdom abounding with eternal plenty.

Moses, when but a newborn infant, nearly escaped being put death by Pharaoh, who had condemned all the male children of the Jews.

Moses, in his youth, was well skilled in all manner of learning in use among the Egyptians.

Moses fasted forty days in the company of God in Mount Sinai.

Moses miraculously fed the people in the desert with manna and quails.

Moses passed through the waters of the Red Sea unhurt.

Moses, by holding out his rod, divided the sea.

The Israelites, by reason of the dazzling lustre of Moses's face, could not look at him.

Christ, whilst an infant, and adored by the Wise Men, was forced to fly into Egypt from the cruelty of Herod.

Christ, at twelve years of age, was found in the Temple disputing with the Doctors.

Christ was in the wilderness forty days without eating or drinking.

Christ satisfied five thousand hungry people with five loaves and two fishes.

Christ walked upon the waters of the sea.

Christ, with a word, rebuked the sea, and it became calm.

Christ's disciples were so terrified at the magnificence of his transfiguration, that they fell on their faces.

Moses restored his leprous sister to her former state of health.

Moses chose out twelve spies to take a view of the promised land.

Moses chose seventy elders to assist him in the administration.

Of Moses it is said, That no man, to the present time, knows the place of his sepulchre.

We shall conclude our character of Moses with what Eusebius, St. Cyril of Alexandria, and others, in short, but very comprehensive words, say of him; namely, that he was the first Theologian of his time in the world, the most distinguished Philosopher, the greatest Poet, and most accurate Historian; and that he was noticed by the Almighty in a manner far superior to the rest of mankind.

Christ, out of his mercy, absolved penitent Magdalen from all her sins.

Christ chose twelve disciples.

Christ commissioned seventy disciples to preach the Gospel.

Of Christ, the angels bore witness, "Ye seek Jesus that was crucified; he is risen, he is not here."

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A NEW AND COMPLETE
UNIVERSAL HISTORY
OF THE
HOLY BIBLE.

BOOK II.

From the DEATH of MOSES, to the building of SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.
[Including a Period of 447 Years.]

CHAPTER I.

Joshua succeeds Moses in the government of the Israelites. Sends spies into the land of Canaan, who return safe to the camp at the instigation of a woman named Rahab. The Israelites pass the river Jordan, lay siege to Jericho, and entirely destroy it. The death of Achan, for concealing some of the treasure. Joshua sends a party to invest Ai, who are defeated. He makes a second attempt upon it, and reduces the whole to ashes. Forms a league with the Gibeonites. Defeats the confederate princes of the Canaanites, and reduces their country to subjection. Divides it by lots among the different tribes. His death and character.

ON the death of Moses, Joshua, being appointed to succeed him in the government of the Israelites, was installed into the kingly office by Eleazar the high-priest, and with the universal approbation of the people. To encourage him in the great work he had to undertake, the Almighty expressly commanded him (as he had done his servant Moses) to lead the people over the Jordan, telling him, that every place on which they should tread should be their own, and that no man should be able to stand against him: that, in like manner as he had been with Moses, so he would be with him, and that he might be assured he would never forsake him.

Encouraged by these Divine assurances, Joshua ordered the officers to proclaim throughout the camp, that within a few days they should pass the Jordan, in order to possess the land which the Almighty had promised them, and that therefore they should provide themselves with proper necessaries on the occasion. He then called together the leaders of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, whom he reminded of the promises they

had made to Moses, and entreated them, not only for his sake, but also their own, to fulfil their engagements. They faithfully promised to comply with his request, and that they would be equally obedient to him as they had been to his predecessor.

Opposite to Joshua's camp stood the city of Jericho, which of course must be the first place he would have to attack after passing the river Jordan. As a necessary precaution, he sent two spies to take a view of the strength and situation of that city, and to learn the disposition of the inhabitants. They accordingly entered Jericho, and being considered as strangers come thither to gratify their curiosity, were permitted to perambulate the streets without the least molestation. On the close of the day they took up their residence in the house of a woman, named Rahab, where, after refreshing themselves, they retired to rest.

In the mean time information had been given the king, that there were two spies in the city, and that they had concealed themselves in the house of Rahab. On this the king immediately dispatched proper officers to seize them; but

Rahab

Rahab (who had been previously informed of it) before their arrival, had secreted the two spies, under some stalks of flax on the roof * of the house.

When the messengers arrived, and related their business, Rahab told them, there had been such people at her house, but she knew not who they were, nor from whence they came: that a short time after dark, and before the gates of the city were shut, they departed; and, as they could not be got far, it would be no difficult matter to overtake them. The messengers, believing Rahab's story, left her, and immediately set out in pursuit of the spies.

As soon as they were gone, Rahab uncovered her guests, told them what had passed, and pointed out the great danger to which she had exposed herself and family for their protection. In return for this kindness she exacted from them an oath, that when the city should be invested by the Hebrews, they should preserve her and her relations from the general destruction. To effect this, they told her, that when she found the city attacked, to shut herself up, with her family, in her house, and that, in order to distinguish it from the rest, she must hang a scarlet thread to the door, which signal should be communicated to the general, who would, no doubt, give such directions, as to secure her from all danger. This being agreed on, Rahab, for the better security of her guests, let them down into the street by a rope fastened to the window, so that they made their escape unperceived. She advised them, immediately to fly to the mountains, and there conceal themselves for three days, in which time the messengers, finding their endeavours ineffectual, would relinquish the pursuit.

The two spies took Rahab's advice, and the consequences turned out as she had predicted; for, after two days search, the messengers, despairing of success, gave over the pursuit, and returned to Jericho. At the close of the third day the two spies left the mountains, crossed the Jordan, and arriving safe at the camp of Joshua, gave him a faithful account of their expedition; adding, that for certain the Lord had delivered the country into their hands, for the people were quite dispirited at the name of the Israelites.

Pleased with this intelligence, Joshua, early the next morning, left Shittim, and conducted his army within a small distance of the place where it was intended they should cross the river Jordan. Here he communicated to every tribe the order to be observed in their march. He told them, that when they saw the Ark of the Lord carried by the priests, the whole army should then move and follow it, that they might know the way by which they were to go; and that they should leave a space of two thousand cubits between them and the Ark. That when

the priests were got into the middle of the channel, they should there stand still till the whole multitude were got safe on the opposite shore; and, to prepare themselves properly for this remarkable passage, they were all enjoined to sanctify themselves, by washing their cloaths, avoiding all impurities, and abstaining from matrimonial intercourse the preceding night. He also, by the direction of the Almighty, appointed twelve men (one out of each tribe) to chuse twelve stones from the middle of the river where the priests were to stand with the Ark, and there to set them up (that they might be seen from each side of the river when the waters were abated) as a monument of this great miracle; and to take twelve others with them to be erected on the land for the like purpose.

Having given these necessary orders, early the next morning, which was the tenth day of the first month, the whole army proceeded on their march. The priests, with the Ark, went first, and as soon as they touched the river with their feet the rapidity of the stream abated; the waters above went back, and rose on heaps for a considerable distance, while those below continued their course the contrary way, so that there was a passage opened of about sixteen miles for the Israelites to pass. The priests stood with the Ark in the middle of the channel till the whole multitude had got on the other side, when having raised the twelve stones as Joshua had commanded, they left the bed of the river, on which the waters immediately returned, and resumed their natural course.

The Israelites, having, by this miraculous passage, gained the plains of Jericho, encamped in a place afterwards called Gilgal†, where Joshua erected the twelve stones, which had been brought from the Jordan, as a monument to posterity of the Almighty's interposition in assisting them to pass that river.

This extraordinary event being soon circulated through the adjacent parts of the country, the people were filled with the greatest amazement; and when the kings of the Amorites (who were on the west side of the Jordan) and the kings of the Canaanites (who inhabited those parts next the sea) heard of it, their hearts sunk for fear, and their courage failed them.

Soon after Joshua had encamped his army, God commanded the rite of circumcision (which had been neglected for almost forty years) to be renewed, that the people might be properly qualified to partake of the ensuing passover‡. This order being obeyed, the Lord said unto Joshua, *this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt (i. e. uncircumcision) from off you, wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal, (i. e. rolling) unto this day.*

As the Israelites were now arrived in a country where there was a sufficiency of corn for unleavened

* It was the custom, in those countries, for the people to build their houses with flat roofs, and, in general, their bed-chambers were on the uppermost story. The method used by the woman to conceal the spies shews her to have had a great share of prudence, and, at the same time, a firm belief that God would give up her native country to the Israelites.

† This place received its name from the rite of circumci-

sion, which had been long disused, being here renewed. It lay about two miles to the north-east of Jericho, and St. Jerome tells us, that in his time it was greatly venerated by the inhabitants.

‡ This was the third time of their celebrating that festival. The first was at their departure out of Egypt; and the second at their erecting the tabernacle at the foot of Mount Sinai.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



*The falling of the Walls of **JERICO**, burning the City,
and Destruction of the Inhabitants, by the **ISRAELITES**.*

vened bread, God insisted upon the observance of his ordinances, and resolved that all things should now go in a regular way. He therefore ceased to supply them any longer with manna, but left them, for the future, to enjoy the products of the promised inheritance.

Joshua, previous to his marching his army against Jericho, went from the camp alone, in order to reconnoitre the city, and to discover which would be the most advantageous way of approaching it. While he was making his observations, on a sudden there appeared before him a person resembling a man, but with a lustre in his face that indicated he was more than mortal. In his hand he held a flaming sword, and his whole appearance far surpassed any thing of human nature. Undaunted at this unusual sight, Joshua advanced towards him, and, demanding of what party he was, the vision replied, of the host of the Lord §, of which he was captain and guardian. On this answer, Joshua immediately threw himself prostrate on the ground, when the vision, after ordering him to loose the sandals from his feet, proceeded to instruct him in what manner he would have the siege carried on, that the Canaanites might see it was not the arm of flesh alone by which they would be defeated. The instructions Joshua received were these: that for six successive days the whole army should march round the city, with seven priests before the Ark, having in their hands trumpets made of ram's horns. That on the seventh day, after the army had gone round the city seven times, upon signal given, the priests were to blow their trumpets as loud as possible, and the people, on a sudden to set up a great shout; at which instant the walls of the city should fall to the ground, and they might walk into it without the least obstruction.

Having received these orders from the Divine messenger, Joshua returned to the camp, and early the next morning marched with his whole army against Jericho. The place was strong, well provided, and full of inhabitants, who had retired into it, and seemed resolved to make a vigorous defence.

But Joshua had an irresistible force on his side. He strictly obeyed the orders he had received, and the promises made him were amply fulfilled; for, on the seventh day, as soon as the people shouted, after going round the city seven times, the walls suddenly fell to the ground. In consequence of this the Israelites immediately entered the place, and put every living creature to the sword, except Rahab and her relations, who being preserved, as had been directed by Joshua, agreeable to the promise made by the spies, were placed without the camp of the army.

In the city were found great quantities of gold, silver, and brass, the whole of which was of immense value, and being gathered together, as Joshua had ordered, he presented it to the priests, to be deposited in the sacred treasury.

Having destroyed all the inhabitants, Joshua ordered the city to be set on fire, which was accordingly done, and the whole reduced to a heap of ashes. He likewise denounced a heavy curse on any person who should ever after attempt to rebuild it. That whoever should take upon him to lay the first stone might be punished by the loss of his eldest son; and whoever should finish the work, his youngest ||.

Notwithstanding Joshua had taken the greatest precaution to prevent private plunder in the taking of Jericho, yet one Achan, of the tribe of Judah, committed a violent depredation, by taking to himself the rich cloak of the king of the Canaanites, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels. He secreted these treasures in a pit he had dug in his tent, foolishly supposing the fact would be no more noticed by God, than it was known by his companions. But in this he soon found himself mistaken.

About twelve miles from Jericho (to the east of Bethel) was a small city called Ai, which Joshua knowing to be neither populous, or well defended, he detached a small body of men to take it. But they did not find the conquest so easy as they had imagined; for no sooner did they approach the place than the inhabitants immediately sallied out upon them, and having slain some, the rest were so frightened, that they betook themselves to flight, and were pursued by the enemy within a small distance of their own camp.

This defeat, though small, struck an universal damp on the spirits of the people; and Joshua, in particular, was so afflicted, that he had recourse to the Almighty, who told him, there was a latent cause of his displeasure among the people: that some of them had taken of the accursed * thing, and also of those things which were devoted to the Lord, and, instead of bringing them to the treasury of God, had concealed them for their own use. He likewise told Joshua that no success could attend the House of Israel, till the accursed thing was removed; and discovered to him the means whereby the offender might be discovered, and properly punished.

Agreeable to the divine instructions Joshua, early the next morning, set about the business of discovering the thief, who had brought so great an evil on the people. For this purpose he ordered all the tribes to assemble before the altar, where, first casting lots among the tribes,

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§ It is the opinion of the best commentators, both ancient and modern, that the person, here called the captain of the Lord's host, was no other than an angel, or messenger from God, who was pleased, in this manner, to appear to Joshua, both to encourage and direct him.

|| The words of Joshua's execration in the text are as follow: "Curfed be the man before the Lord, that raiseth up and buildeth this city Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it." Joshua vi. 26.

* In the same sense is the word Anathema used in the New Testament, by St. Paul, who calls offenders Anathema, that is, accursed, or separated from God, which is the old word for excommunication in the canons of the church at the most distant ages. In this instance it is observable, that though it was but one man that was actually guilty, yet the guilt was charged upon the whole people, and they felt the effects thereof, till they had convicted and punished the offender.

it appeared the thief belonged to that of Judah. They then proceeded from tribe to family, from family to household, and from household to particular persons; when the criminal was at length discovered to be Achan, who, on Joshua's admonition, made an ample confession of the whole. "I have, says he, sinned against the Lord God of Israel, for when I saw among the spoil a royal garment and two hundred shekels of silver, with a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, my covetousness prompted me to take them; which I did, and hid them in the earth in the midst of my tent."

On this frank confession, Joshua sent messengers to examine Achan's tent, who finding the treasures, brought them away, and laid them before the people. The offender being thus fully convicted, they took him, together with his family (whom they considered as accomplices in his crime) his cattle, tent, and all his moveables, and conducted them to a neighbouring valley, (called from that time, in allusion to this man's name, the valley of Achor) where they were first stoned to death, and their bodies afterwards reduced to ashes. They likewise burnt all their goods and utensils, and erected over the whole a pile of stones, to perpetuate the memory of the crime, and to deter others from committing the like offence.

The Divine vengeance being appeased by the sentence executed upon Achan, God commanded Joshua to make another attempt on the city of Ai, assuring him that he should be no less successful than he had been in the attack on Jericho. As an encouragement to the soldiers he allowed them the plunder of the city and cattle, and, in order the more easily to facilitate the conquest, particularly enjoined Joshua to place a party of men in ambuscade near the city.

Agreeable to these instructions Joshua selected thirty thousand men, out of which he sent away by night five thousand to conceal themselves between Bethel and Ai, who, on a signal given by him (which was to be the holding up of a spear, with a banner upon it) were immediately to enter the city, and set it on fire. Early the next morning Joshua marched with his army before the north part of the city. As soon as the king of Ai perceived him, he immediately sallied out of the town with his troops, followed by the greater part of the inhabitants, all of whom had been so elated with their former success that they did not doubt of soon making an easy conquest. They accordingly fell on the Israelites with great fury, who, at the first onset, gave way, and retreated a considerable distance from the city. But this was only a feint to draw the enemy into the plain; and, therefore, as soon as Joshua saw that, by this stratagem, the city was pretty well emptied, he gave the signal to the

ambuscade, who, finding it defenceless, immediately entered, and set it on fire. The ascent of the smok convinced Joshua that his men had got possession of the place; upon which he suddenly turned about, and faced the enemy, who, little expecting the Israelites would rally, were so surprised, that they began to think of retreating to the city. But, when they saw it all in flames, and the party who had set it on fire just going to fall upon their rear, they were so dispirited, that they could neither fight nor fly; in consequence of which they were all cut to pieces by the Israelites, who, immediately marching to the city, put all they found in it to the sword; the whole number, men, women and children, slain that day, amounted to twelve thousand. The king of Ai being taken prisoner, was ordered to be hung on a gibbet till sun-set; after which his body was taken down and buried under a great heap of stones near the entrance of the city. The cattle and spoil taken from the enemy were (according to the Divine appointment) divided among the soldiers, who so effectually destroyed the city as to leave it a mere heap of rubbish.

As Joshua was now but a small distance from the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal †, he be-thought himself of the command, which had been given him by Moses ‡, relative to the reading of the law (with the blessings and curses thereunto annexed) from those two mountains. He accordingly went to Mount Ebal, where he erected an altar, on which he offered up sacrifices to God for his late victories. He likewise caused an abridgment of the law, or some of the most remarkable parts of it, to be engraven on stones; and afterwards read the whole of it to the people, as had been commanded by Moses.

The great success of Joshua against the cities of Jericho and Ai, and the dreadful slaughter made among the inhabitants, had so alarmed the kings of the respective provinces on that side the river Jordan, that they confederated together, and entered into a league for their mutual defence. But the Gibeonites, foreseeing the destruction that awaited them, and being apprehensive that all resistance would be in vain, resolved to make a peace with the Israelites, which they effected by the following stratagem: They selected a certain number of artful men, who were instructed to feign themselves ambassadors come from a very distant country, in order to obtain a league with the people of Israel. To make this story appear plausible, they were dressed in tattered garments, with old clouted shoes on their feet; and their provision consisted of dry musty bread, which they carried in old sacks, with some wine in bottles § all tarnished and torn. In this woeful-appearing plight they arrived at Gilgal, the place where the army

† These two mountains are so near each other, that they are only separated by a valley of about two hundred paces wide, in which is situated the town of Shechem. They are much alike in length, height and form: their figure is semicircle, and on the side of Shechem they are so steep that there is not the least shelving: they are at most about half a league in length. But notwithstanding they are so much

alike in the particulars mentioned, they are very different in one instance; namely, Ebal is desolate and barren, whereas Gerizim is beautiful and fruitful.

‡ See Deut. xi. 29. and xxvii. 1—13.

§ These bottles were not (as those in use among us) made of glass, but of leather; and even at this time, in some countries, they keep their wine in such kind of vessels.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



JOSHUA, VIII. 20.

*The BATTLE of AI, with the DESTRUCTION of
the CITY, by the Army of JOSHUA.*

of the Israelites was at this time encamped.

Being introduced to Joshua, they told him, that from the many miracles which God had wrought for the Israelites in the land of Egypt, and the wonderful successes wherewith he had blessed their arms against every power that had opposed them in coming to that place, their states and rulers had sent them, from a very remote country, to form a league of friendship with them, and that on such conditions as were customary with their forefathers. They then pointed to their garments, which they solemnly assured Joshua were quite new when they sat out on their journey, but that the great length of it had reduced them to the state in which they then appeared.

This stratagem had the desired effect: The plausible story of these feigned ambassadors gained such credit with the Israelites, that they entered into an amicable alliance with them; and Eleazar, the high-priest, with the princes of the respective tribes, solemnly ratified the treaty, the whole multitude assenting to the oaths made by their leaders. When the business was over, the Gibeonites took their leave, and hastened home with the glad tidings of their successful expedition.

Three days after the departure of these ambassadors, the whole plot was discovered, when it appeared that the Gibeonites were inhabitants of Canaan, and that they resided at a small distance from Jerusalem. This discovery greatly alarmed Joshua, who immediately sent for their governors, and reproached them for having practised such a deception; to which they replied, that they were compelled to do it in their own defence, as they knew they should otherwise share a similar fate with the inhabitants of Jericho and Ai. Joshua was desirous of having the league cancelled; but as it was confirmed by a solemn oath, this could not be done, without incurring the divine displeasure. It was therefore resolved, in order to appease the people, that, as a punishment for the imposition, the Gibeonites should ever after be kept in a state of bondage, by being made hewers of wood and drawers of water. This sentence they received without the least murmur, humbly acquiescing in whatever was thought proper to be imposed upon them by the Israelites.

When the confederate princes (who were five in number, the principal of whom was Adonizedek, king of Jerusalem) heard of the separate treaty made by the Gibeonites, and the artful manner in which it was obtained, they resolved to be revenged on them for their desertion of the common cause. Accordingly they joined all their forces, and marched towards the city of Gibeon, with a firm resolution of totally destroying it. When they came within a small distance of the place they pitched their

tents, intending to begin the attack early the next morning. In the meantime the Gibeonites (not daring to trust to their own strength) dispatched a messenger to Joshua, imploring his immediate assistance, as they must otherwise inevitably fall into the hands of the Canaanites.

Joshua lost no time in complying with their request. He immediately set out with his army, and after marching the whole night, arrived, the next morning, at the spot where the enemy were encamped. The appearance of so formidable an army, and so unexpected, had such an effect on the Canaanites, that on Joshua's making an attack they immediately gave way, and were entirely routed, many being killed, and the rest betaking themselves to a precipitate flight. God had all along encouraged Joshua by promising him success; and therefore, as the confederate forces were endeavouring to escape, there fell a most violent storm of hail, the stones of which were so large that more people were destroyed by them than what fell by the sword. Joshua was so desirous of totally extirpating the Canaanites, and so elevated with the manifest interposition of the Almighty, that while he was in chase of them, he begged, in the most fervent manner, that the sun and moon might stand still till he had accomplished his wishes. Notwithstanding the singularity of this request, God was pleased to grant it; so that this was the most memorable day that ever happened, the Almighty condescending to alter the course of nature to answer the purposes of man ||.

The confederate kings, finding themselves closely pursued, and likely to be either slain, or made captives, concealed themselves in a cave, near Makkedah, a city belonging to the tribe of Judah; intelligence of which being given to Joshua, he ordered the mouth of the cave to be blocked up, and a guard placed over it, to prevent their escape. In this situation they remained till Joshua returned from pursuing the fugitives, when he ordered the cave to be opened, and the kings to be brought forth, and hung upon trees till the evening. This was accordingly done, when their bodies were taken down, and thrown into the cave; so that the place they had chosen for their sanctuary became their sepulchre.

After this signal victory, Joshua proceeded to the southern parts of Canaan; in which, having soon reduced the most considerable places, and put the inhabitants to the sword, he returned, with his victorious army, to the camp at Gilgal.

The great fame of Joshua being now spread throughout Canaan, several princes of the northern parts, at the instigation of Jabin, king of Hazor, confederated together, and raised a prodigious army*, to engage the Israelites, which they encamped at Berotha, a city of the Upper Galilee,

|| The deists have greatly cavilled at this miracle, on account of its not being recorded by heathen writers. But that it should not be mentioned by them is not in the least to be wondered at, when we consider, that Homer, who wrote above a thousand years after Joshua, is their oldest writer now extant. Letters were not then known among the

heathens, and, therefore, there is no wonder that such a circumstance should have been forgotten.

* According to Josephus, their whole army consisted of 30,000 foot, 10,000 horse, and 2000 chariots; a very formidable army indeed, and such as might have struck terror in Joshua, had he not been assured of the Divine protection.

Galilee, not far from the waters of Merom †. This, however, did not in the least intimidate Joshua, who, in pursuance of the instructions which God had given him, (namely, that he should not only destroy them, but also their horses and chariots) immediately took the field, marched towards the enemy, and fell so suddenly on them, that they were totally routed, and except some few who escaped into the country, were all put to the sword; after which he hamstringed their horses and burnt their chariots. Jabin, king of Hazor, who had been at the head of the confederacy, and was taken prisoner, he put to death, and ordered his city to be burnt to the ground; but the other cities, whose inhabitants were slain in the action, he left standing, and gave the cattle and plunder to the soldiers.

After defeating this powerful army, Joshua pursued his rout to the most distant parts of Canaan; and, by degrees, subdued all the inhabitants of the country. He slew all their kings, who were thirty-one in number, together with the Anakims, or giants, of whom he left none remaining, except in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

Joshua, having now extended his conquests as far as he thought necessary at present, resolved to divide the country he had taken among the nine tribes and a half who were yet unprovided for, and to dismiss the two tribes and a half (namely, those of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh) who had assisted him in the wars, and whose habitations had been settled by Moses on the east side of the river Jordan.

In consequence of this resolution, Joshua appointed commissioners to take a survey of the captured land, and ordered them to report the state of it with all expedition. These messengers having executed their commission, returned, at the expiration of seven months, to Joshua, to whom, having delivered their report he, assisted by Eleazar the high-priest, the elders, and

the princes of the respective tribes, divided the whole country into equal portions, for which (according to God's direction) each tribe cast lots; but as some of the tribes were larger, and some territories richer than others, he took care to adjust the proportion of land to the largeness of the tribe, and the number of families in each; so that, notwithstanding they cast lots, the divisions were all made as equal as possible ‡.

As soon as Joshua had thus divided the country on the west side of the Jordan, he took up his residence at a small place near Shiloh, where after the wars the tabernacle was set up, that he might have the opportunity, as occasion should offer, of consulting the divine oracle.

After being here a few days, Joshua assembled together the auxiliaries (namely, the tribes of Reuben and Gad, with the half tribe of Manasseh) and gave them an honourable dismissal. "He acknowledged the great services they had done him in his wars with the Canaanites, and highly applauded their courage and fidelity. He exhorted them, as they were now going to be separated from the tabernacle, to be diligent in their duty to God, and to bear always in mind those laws which he had given them by his servant Moses. He advised them to distribute a share of the rich booty they had got among their brethren on the other side the Jordan; because, though they did not partake of the troubles of the war, they had nevertheless been of infinite service in protecting their families during their absence §." With these acknowledgments and exhortations, together with many sincere wishes for their prosperity, Joshua dismissed them, and they immediately departed for their own country.

As soon as these two tribes and a half arrived on the opposite side of the river Jordan, they erected an altar near the place where they and their brethren had miraculously passed over, not for any religious use, but as a memorial to succeeding

† Some of the learned are of opinion, that by the Waters of Merom are meant the lake Semechon, which lies between the head of the river Jordan and the lake Genesareth. But others imagine that these waters were somewhere about the brook Kishon, there being a place of that name mentioned in the account of the battle against Sisera, Judges v. 21. It is, however, more reasonable to think, that the confederate kings advanced as far as the brook Kishon, and to a pass which led into the country, to hinder Joshua from penetrating it, than to imagine, that they waited for him in the midst of their own country, leaving all Galilee at his mercy, and the whole track from the brook Kishon to the lake Semechon. See Wells's Geography of the Old Testament.

‡ The measures Joshua took, on this occasion, were exactly conformable to the orders which God had given to Moses. *Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance, according to the number of names. To many thou shalt give the more inheritance; and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance.—Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot;—according to lot shall the possession thereof be divided between many and few.* See Numb. xxvi. 53, &c.

§ The learned Masius, in his Commentary upon Joshua, makes the following curious remark on this singular transaction, viz. that as Jacob and Moses, at the approach of their deaths, foretold the very soil and situation of every particular country that should fall to each tribe; so, upon this division by lots, it accordingly came to pass; for,

To the tribe of Judah there fell a country abounding with vines and pasture-grounds. Gen. xlix. 11.

To that of Ashur, one plenteous in oil, iron and brass,

Deut. xxxiii. 24. 25.

To that of Naphthali, one extending from the West to the South of Judea, Deut. 33. 23.

To that of Benjamin, one in which the temple was afterwards built, Deut. xxxiii. 12.

To those of Zebulun and Issachar, such as had plenty of sea-ports, Gen. xlix. 13.

To those of Ephraim and Manasseh, such as were renowned for their precious fruits. Deut. xxxiii. 14.

To those of Simeon and Levi, no particular countries at all; the former having a portion with Judah, and the latter being interspersed among the different tribes.

These particular lots (agreeable to the observation of our commentator) answering so exactly to each prediction, is an undeniable proof that the whole was directed by the immediate hand of the Almighty.

§ In the speech which Josephus introduces Joshua making to the tribes on this occasion, he concludes as follows: "Let no distance of place, says he, no interposition of rivers, set limits to our friendship, or divide our affections; for, however separated, we are all Hebrews still. It was from one and the same God that Abraham, and all our forefathers, received their being; and it is that God we are all to worship according to the ordinances and institutions left us by Moses. So long as we stand firm to our religion, we may be assured of the favour and protection of that God for our comfort; but should you deviate from your religious principles, and embrace idolatry, depend upon it, the God of your fathers will desert and forsake you."

ceding generations, that though they were parted by the river, they were of the same descent and religion, and held an equal right to the tabernacle at Shiloh, and to the worship of God performed there, as their brethren on the other side the Jordan. This had like to have proved of fatal consequences, for the latter, either from being misinformed, or misapprehending the intent of the altar being erected, fell into a violent rage, considering them as apostates from the true religion; and, in order to punish them, assembled their forces at Shiloh, with a resolution of immediately declaring war against them. But before they proceeded to these extremities, their rulers advised them to suspend the execution of their wrath till they had sent a deputation in order to know their reason for building such an altar. This being agreed to, they sent Phineas, the son of Eleazar, with ten princes, one out of each tribe, to expostulate with them on their conduct. On their arrival Phineas accosted them in very severe terms, charging them with idolatry and rebellion against the Lord.

He reminded them of the calamities which God had formerly sent upon them for their worship of Baal-peor; and that, if he had been so severe upon them for the offence of one man (namely, Achan only) what might they not expect, when two tribes and a half were going to make a general revolt? He then concluded by saying, "If ye have done this from any apprehension that the land ye possess on this side the Jordan is unclean, or less holy than ours, because the tabernacle is on our side, return and settle among us where the Tabernacle resteth; but by no means rebel against the Lord, nor us, in building you an altar besides the Altar of the Lord."

The Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites, concerned to hear the ill opinion which their brethren had conceived of them, protested their innocence of any idolatrous intention, and made a solemn appeal to God, that so far were they from setting up an altar in opposition to his, that the only design of the structure they had raised was, to perpetuate their right to the service of the tabernacle, and to secure it to their latest posterity.

From this answer the deputies were fully convinced that the accusation laid against their brethren was totally groundless, and instead of having committed a crime, that they had only given an instance of their sincere attachment to their religious duties. The deputies, therefore, after taking a friendly leave, returned to Shiloh, and having communicated the particulars of all that had passed to the people, they expressed the greatest satisfaction at the result of the embassy; and the angry thoughts of war were immediately changed into peace and brotherly affection.

On the other hand, the Reubenites and their brethren, to prevent any future jealousy, or suspicion, called the altar they had erected *Ed*, intending it as a standing witness (for so the word signifies) that though they lived at a distance from the rest of their brethren, yet they had all but one origin, and one God, who was the common God and Father of all Israel.

This matter being adjusted, and the Israelites quietly settled in the possession of their conquests on both sides the river Jordan, Joshua disbanded his forces, and retired to Sechem.

No particular occurrence took place from this period till the death of Joshua, which happened about twenty years after. He was at this time far advanced in years, and finding his dissolution near at hand, he convened a general assembly of the princes and magistrates, with as many of the common people as could be gathered together. As soon as they were met, he harangued them in a very pertinent discourse on the great benefits and protection they had received from the hand of Providence. He pointed out to them in what manner he had preserved them, even in the midst of dangers; and that he had not only relieved them in all their wants and distresses, but had removed them from the most abject, to the most prosperous situation in life. In gratitude to so great a protector and benefactor, he exhorted them to a faithful observance of his laws, and invited them to renew their covenant with God, which their forefathers had made. This being done in very ample and significant terms, he recorded the Covenant in the Book of the Law, and set up a great stone under an oak, near a place of religious worship, as a testimony against them, should they ever after deny God's service.

A short time after this Joshua paid the debt of nature, in the 110th year of his age. He was buried at *Tinmath-serah*, in Mount Ephraim, which city, on the division of the land amongst the tribes, was given to him by the Israelites, as an acknowledgment for the great services they had received from his administration.

Much about the same time died Eleazar, the high-priest, who was likewise buried in one of the hills of Ephraim, which had been given him by the Israelites, and which afterwards descended to Phineas, his son, and successor in the priesthood.

These two funerals, so near the same time and place, reminded the Israelites of the bones of Joseph, which, at his request, had been brought out of Egypt, but not yet interred. They therefore took this opportunity of performing the funeral obsequies of their great progenitor in Shechem, where Jacob had purchased a piece of ground of the sons of Hamor, and which afterwards became the inheritance of Joseph's posterity.

|| The character Josephus gives of Joshua is as follows:
"He was, says he, a man who possessed great prudence,
"and had a manner of expressing his thoughts that gave
"pleasure to all who heard him. He was brave and inde-

"fatigable in war; and in times of peace conducted him-
"self in such a manner as to acquire the universal good-
"will and affections of the people."

C H A P II.

The government of the Israelites is placed in the hands of the tribe of Judah, who is assisted by that of Simeon. Their success over the Canaanites. The other tribes also prove victorious. The people become disobedient, for which they are severely reprov'd by the angel. They fall into idolatry; and are deprived of the Divine assistance. The particular idolatry of the Danites. The Benjamites mal-treat the wife of a Levite, which produces a war between them and the other tribes. The Benjamites are defeated and the greater part of them killed, after which a peace is made, and those who escaped restored to their former privileges. The Israelites become tributary to the king of Moab, who is assassinated, and his people totally destroyed. Deborah and Barak conquer Sisera, the general of Jabin's forces. Sisera is treacherously assassinated, on which occasion Deborah composes a song of triumph.

AS Joshua had not appointed any person to succeed him in the government of the people, and management of the war against the Canaanites, so on his death, the Israelites were, for some time, at a loss how to proceed for want of a proper commander*. At length, reflecting on the advice given them by their deceased leader, and warned by the dreadful punishments that had been inflicted on their forefathers, in consequence of their disobedience, they resolved to repair to the Oracle at Shiloh, and there ask direction of God relative to the prosecution of the war. In consequence of this resolution the heads of the different tribes went to Shiloh, and received instructions from God, that Judah, at the head of his tribe, should begin the renewal of the war, and that his endeavours should be crowned with success. Upon this the tribe of Judah invited that of Simeon to join them in the expedition, who readily assenting, they immediately prepared themselves, and marched out against the enemy.

The Canaanites were at this time exceeding strong, and receiving intimation of the intentions of the Israelites, they gathered together a great army under the command of Adonibezek, and encamped themselves in the city of Bezek. Their principal expectations of not being defeated were built on the loss of Joshua; but they soon found themselves deceived; for, when the two tribes of Israelites attacked them, they fell on with such resolution that the Canaanites immediately gave way, and upwards of 10,000 were killed on the field. Great numbers took to flight, but being closely pursued few of them escaped. Adonibezek, their leader, was taken captive, and being brought before the elders of the two tribes, they ordered his thumbs and great toes to be cut off, in like manner as he had done to no less than seventy

little kings or princes; so that the similitude of punishment made the tyrant reflect on his own cruel disposition, and acknowledge the justice of God in what he had brought upon him. After inflicting the punishment on Adonibezek, they sent him prisoner to the city of Jebus† (or Jerusalem) which had been before taken by the Israelites, the inhabitants put to the sword, and the city burnt; where, after languishing some time, he died.

Having thus subdued the inhabitants of Bezek and several adjoining places, the Israelites next marched to Hebron, of which they made themselves masters without the least resistance. From hence they proceeded to Debir, which was part of Caleb's allotment, though at that time in possession of the Canaanites. Caleb (who, in all probability, was general in these wars) being resolved to storm the place, made proclamation in the camp, that whoever should attack and carry it should have his daughter Achsah as a reward for his valour. Animated by this offer, the brave and gallant Othniel (nephew to Caleb and son to his younger brother Kenaz) undertook the task, succeeded in the attempt, and obtained the beautiful damsel for his wife. But Achsah, not thinking herself a sufficient reward in return for the great feats performed by her valiant hero, persuaded him to ask her father for a field, or parcel of land, that was remarkable for the richness and fertility of its soil, as well as the great convenience of its being plentifully supplied with water. Othniel, thinking his services already sufficiently paid, was backward in complying with this request; upon which Achsah undertook the task herself. She first asked her father for his blessing, and then addressed herself to him in words to this effect: "Thou hast (said she) already given me a pleasant estate in the south

* After the death of Joshua the Israelites were, for a long time, without any king or sovereign. Every tribe, being governed by its elders, chose its own commanders for war, who, by degrees, subdued the rest of the inhabitants of the country, either by destroying or making them tributaries. The neighbouring king of the Canaanites made war on, and sometimes subdued, the Israelites; but God, from time to time, raised some persons who delivered them from their oppressors. In acknowledgement for which benefits the people not only appointed them as commanders of their

troops, but also as their judges, or supreme magistrates; and from these circumstances this part of the History is, in the Sacred Writings, called the *Book of Judges*.

† Jebus was one of the most ancient cities in the world; and Josephus says, that it was the residence of Melchizedec, to whom Abraham paid tythes. It is, in the Book of Judges, called Jerusalem, but it did not acquire this name till a long time after it was taken and burnt by the Israelites. In the course of time it was rebuilt, called Jerusalem, and made the metropolis of the whole kingdom.

“ south part of the country ; but it is hot and dry, and likely to prove barren : give me, therefore, I pray thee, this parcel of land which is good and well watered.” The generous parent granted his daughter's request, by which she was not only furnished, through this incident, with a husband, but likewise obtained a considerable addition to her former possessions.

Thus did the tribe of Simeon assist that of Judah to subdue the mountainous parts of the country towards Jebus (or Jerusalem) as also the southern parts adjoining to the wilderness of Paran, in the course of which they totally extirpated the gigantic race of Anak. In return for this the tribe of Judah assisted that of Simeon to take Gaza, Askelon, Ekron, and Zephath (the latter of which was at that time called Hormah ;) all which places, in after-times, came into their possession. All these were the mountainous parts of the country ; but the inhabitants of the vallies kept their ground, being a hardy people, and well provided with all kinds of war-like ammunition, particularly chariots made of iron.

While the united tribes of Judah and Simeon were reducing the Canaanites in the mountains, the tribe of Ephraim determined to lay siege to the city of Bethel. For this purpose they sent two spies to take a view of the situation of the place, and to bring intelligence which was the most likely part to begin the attack. The two spies, meeting a man at some distance from the city, immediately seized him, but promised to spare his life, together with those of his family, on condition that he would give them the best information he could which way the town was best approachable. The man, to save his life, did as he was requested ; and by his information they succeeded so well that, sending for their forces, they entered the place, and, except the man who gave them the intelligence, together with his family, put all the inhabitants to the sword.

The other tribes, except that of Dan, had great success in all their undertakings, making themselves masters of many capital places before possessed by the Canaanites. The tribe of Dan was compelled to quit the plains for fear of the Amorites, who were very superior in point of strength, and to retire into the mountainous parts of the country.

The success which attended those tribes that fought against the Canaanites was productive of some disagreeable circumstances, owing to the impropriety of their conduct in the prosecution of the war. They were far from making a proper use of their conquests, for, either through a misplaced lenity, or covetousness, instead of destroying the Canaanites whom they conquered (as they had been commanded) they suffered them to live promiscuously among them, and contented themselves with making them tributary. This disobedience and neglect highly offended the Almighty, who, to make them sensible of their folly, was pleased to send an angel from Gilgal to expostulate with them on their conduct ; to remind them of the favours which he had vouchsafed them, in delivering them out of Egypt, and bringing them into that happy land ; of his punctual performance of all the promises he had made them, and of their base ingratitude

in rejecting his precepts, for which he had very justly withdrawn from them his Divine protection.

This severe chastisement from the angel sent by God made a deep impression on the minds of the Israelites, who, conscious of their transgression, fell into a general lamentation ; and, deploring the wretchedness of their condition, offered sacrifices to God, in order to appease his wrath, and again restore themselves to his favour. In remembrance of this circumstance they called the place where the angel appeared to them, *Bokeim*, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *weeping* or *affliction*.

Though the Israelites had received such chastisement from the angel for their transgressions, and had testified their sorrow on the occasion, yet it availed but little, for, instead of amending, they soon grew much worse, and gave themselves up to all kinds of dissipation. They increased their correspondence with the Canaanites, indulged themselves in their loose conversation, and made intermarriages with them. Joshua had, just before his death, particularly warned them of the danger they would fall into should they make themselves familiar with the nations whom God had doomed to destruction ; and above all, laid a most strict charge on them to be careful that they did not marry with them, well knowing that if they did it would naturally lead them into idolatry. But though they knew all this, yet they paid no attention to it, and the consequences were as Joshua had predicted ; for they fell into the greatest idolatry, worshipping Baal and Ashtaroath, with other idols of the heathens.

These aggravated offences so displeased the Almighty, that, for some time, he left them to themselves ; the consequence of which was that (for want of the Divine protection) they made so weak a defence, that they were often taken and enslaved by their enemies.

The first oppressor the Israelites met with, after having lost the favour and assistance of God, was Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, who, having invaded the territories of the Israelites, and made an easy conquest, imposed a tribute on them which lasted for eight years.

During this time of servitude the Israelites coming to a proper sense and acknowledgment of their transgressions, implored the Lord to relieve them, who was pleased to comply with their request. He raised up a deliverer for them in the person of the brave Othniel, Caleb's son-in-law, who, in recompence for his valour, had obtained his daughter in marriage. This hero, being divinely inspired, took up arms, and marched against the king of Mesopotamia, whom he soon defeated, relieved the Israelites, and settled them in a state of peace and tranquillity for forty years. During the whole of this time Othniel governed the people, and was the first of those whom the Scripture calls Judges.

But during this space of time the Israelites, possessing an uninterrupted enjoyment under the mild government of Othniel, ran into a variety of absurd extravagancies. They forgot the former favours and benefits God had bestowed on them, and fell into a general apostacy and corruption

corruption of manners, of which the two following are very singular, though melancholy instances †.

In Mount Ephraim lived a man named Micah, whose mother, having given herself over to idolatry, had, by a mistaken zeal, secreted a sum of money, for the purpose of purchasing, or causing to be made, an idol of worship. Her son Micah finding the money, and not knowing to what use his mother had devoted it, took it for himself. The mother, missing the money, and not suspecting her son, did, in his presence, curse the thief; which so frightened Micah that he confessed the fact, and immediately restored it, being in all eleven hundred shekels of silver.

The mother, having received the money again, gave two hundred shekels to her son, desiring him either to procure, or make with it, an idol. The son (who was a strong idolater and had made images for his own use, together with an ephod and seraphim) readily set about the task, and having finished it to the satisfaction of his mother, placed it among his own idols which were fixed in a private apartment he had assigned for that purpose; and to such lengths did the force of his idolatry carry him, that for want of a Levite, he appointed one of his sons to officiate as priest.

It happened, a short time after this, that a certain young Levite of Bethlehem-Judah, travelling from thence to seek a better settlement, called at Micah's house, and, being greatly fatigued with his journey, begged refreshment, and that he would permit him, for that night, to lodge in his house. As soon as Micah understood that his strange visitor was a Levite, he entertained him with the greatest hospitality, and strongly invited him to continue in his house in the character of a priest, offering at the same time, to give him ten shekels a year, his diet, and two suits of apparel, one for common use, and the other to officiate in. The Levite, approving of these terms, agreed with Micah, to the great satisfaction of his new master, who vainly imagined that as he had now got a Levite to be his priest, all future endeavours would infallibly be crowned with success.

About this time the tribe of Dan (who, as we have already observed, were pent up in the mountainous parts of the country) finding their territories much too small, sent out of their body five spies to survey the country, and bring them intelligence what part was most likely for them to extend their boundaries. These spies, in their journey, called at Micah's house, where they were kindly entertained, and knowing the young Levite by his voice, they asked him how he came thither, and what was his business? The Levite informed them of the whole agreement he had made with Micah, and that he was become his priest; upon which the spies begged

him to ask counsel of God what success they might promise themselves in the enterprize upon which they were going. Encouraged by what the Levite told them, they pursued their journey till they came to Laish, where, observing the people to live very secure and careless, without any sort of discipline or government, they concluded it would be no difficult matter to conquer them, and take possession of the place. And with this report they returned to their brethren, giving them at the same time an account of the nature of the country, which was not only exceeding pleasant, but abounded with all the necessaries of life.

The Danites, determined to avail themselves of this opportunity, selected a party of six hundred men, and sent them with all expedition to make themselves masters of the city of Laish. Marching through Mount Ephraim, they came in their way to Micah's house, where, making a halt, the five spies, who were guides to this party, and had been there before, told the rest, that there were in that house an Ephod and Teraphim, together with a graven and molten image; and desired them to consider, whether they had best tarry there to ask counsel of the Lord concerning the success of the enterprize, or take the Ephod and images with them to consult on all future occasions. The last was considered as the most expedient, upon which the five spies, leaving the party, went into the house of Micah, who happening not to be at home, gave them the more convenient opportunity of carrying their intended design into execution. After saluting the Levite they prevailed on him to go and converse with the Danites, during which time they plundered the house of the Ephod, the Teraphim, and the images, all which they carried to their brethren who were waiting their return. As soon as the Levite saw the images and priestly regalia he was struck with amazement, and hastily asked what they meant by having plundered the house of such valuable and sacred articles. The spies told him to be silent, and consider whether it was not better for him to be priest to a whole tribe of Israel than to a single family. This advantageous offer was readily accepted by the Levite, who willingly joining the party, they proceeded on their journey towards Laish.

When Micah returned home, and found that he had not only lost his idols, but also his priest, he was greatly enraged, and mustering together as many of his friends as he could, set out in pursuit of the Danites. After travelling some way they came up with them, and making a dreadful outcry, some of the Danite soldiers in the rear facing about, asked the cause of it, and were answered by Micah, that they had robbed him. The Danites advised him to be silent, lest, by provoking the rest of the party, it should cost them their lives. Micah, knowing himself

to

† These two stories are related in the xvii. xviii. and xixth chapters of Judges, and being so placed they may seem to belong to the latter part of the history of that book; but, in the opinion of the learned, they were certainly transacted about the time they are here introduced, namely, between the death of Joshua and the appointment of the first judge.

The reason why Samuel, or whoever was the author of the Book of Judges, places them towards the close of it is, because he was not willing to interrupt the thread of his history by intermixing these matters with it, but reserved them to be related apart by themselves.

to be over-matched, was obliged to put up with the injury, and to return home without either his idols or his priest.

The Danites prosecuted their march towards Laish, whither on the third day they arrived, and finding it (as the spies had informed them) unguarded, they immediately entered it, burnt the city, destroyed the inhabitants, and took possession of the adjoining country. In the course of a short time they rebuilt the city, which, after the name of their father, they called Dan. Here they set up the images which they had stolen from Micah, and made the Levite (whose name was Jonathan) their priest. In this state of idolatrous worship did the Danites continue till the Ark of God was taken by the Philistines in the days of Samuel, which was a space of about three hundred years.

As this story is an evincing proof of the *apostacy* of the people, so is the following no less so of their *immorality*, and shews, that where riot and dissipation take place, every moral duty is totally annihilated.

In Mount Ephraim was a certain Levite, who took to himself a concubine of the city of Bethlehem, belonging to the tribe of Judah. This woman, being of a lascivious disposition, associated with other men, and soon taking a disgust to her husband, left him, and went to her father, with whom she continued four months. The Levite bore her absence for this time with great patience, but wishing to forget the injury she had done him, and desirous of again possessing her, he at length resolved to go to her father's, and bring her home, taking with him for the purpose a servant and two asses.

When the Levite arrived at his father-in-law's house, he received him with the greatest tenderness, and a reconciliation was formed between him and his concubine to the satisfaction of all parties. After being entertained with the greatest friendship and hospitality for three days, the Levite was desirous of departing, but from the great importunity of his father-in-law he was prevailed on to stay till the afternoon of the fifth day, when he took his leave, and set out with his concubine and servant for their own home.

On their arrival at Jebus (afterwards called Jerusalem) the day was far spent, and the servant being apprehensive of danger should they proceed any farther that night, advised his master to stop there till the next day. But the place, not being fully possessed and inhabited by Israelites, the Levite refused taking his servant's advice, and determined to prosecute his journey as far as Gibeah. Hither they arrived about sun-set, which they had no sooner done than they sat themselves down in the street, as the custom of travellers then was, in expectation that some person or other would invite them to their house, and for that night supply them with necessary refreshments.

After waiting some time without finding their expectations answered, they were at length accosted by a very antient working man belonging to the tribe of Ephraim, who asked them from whence they came, and whither they were going? The Levite told him, and at the same time complained of the incivility of the people, no one having invited him to a lodging, though he had provisions with him not only for himself and family but likewise for his asses.

The old man, being naturally of a very tender and hospitable disposition, invited them to his house, where he furnished them with every kind of refreshment his situation would admit. While they were regaling themselves at supper, a number of abandoned young men belonging to the city beset the house, and insisted that the stranger should be delivered up to them. The old man, anxious for the safety of his guest, expostulated with them on the impropriety of their conduct, and earnestly entreated them not to proceed to any acts of violence. But all his remonstrances were in vain: they insisted on his complying with their request, to avoid which the old man offered them his daughter. This, however, not satisfying them, it was at length agreed to deliver to them the Levite's concubine, which being done, they took her away to their own quarters, and after keeping her the whole night, and treating her with every degree of indecency, they dismissed her.

The woman immediately returned to the old man's house, loaded with such confusion, between shame and indignation, that as soon as she arrived at the place, her spirits were so affected, that she had not power to speak, but immediately fell on the ground, and died.

When the Levite her husband first saw her he knew not that she was dead, and asked her to arise that they might proceed on their journey. But when he discovered his mistake, and found that she was absolutely dead, he was greatly alarmed, and for some time knew not how to proceed. At length, recovering a little from his surprize, he placed the body of the deceased on one of the asses, and, after acknowledging his obligations to the old man, for the civility with which he had treated him, took his leave and departed.

As soon as the Levite arrived at his own house, he divided the body of the dead woman into twelve parts, and sent one to each of the tribes, with a proper relation by the respective messengers, of every particular that had attended this cruel and unprecedented transaction.

When the several tribes had investigated the heinousness of this action among themselves, they were fired with indignation, and the principals of each tribe immediately assembled together at Mispah, near Shiloh, where, sending for the Levite, and hearing from him a particular state of the whole transaction, they determined

§ The laws of hospitality were, in antient times, held exceeding sacred; but the men of Gibeah, as they were grossly abandoned in vice, so were they wholly defective in this virtue, suffering these travellers to remain in the streets without any invitation; which, at length, they received from a poor man, who was himself only a sojourner amongst

them. It must be remembered that then, as well as at present, there were no such things as inns in these countries, so that travellers usually took with them (especially on long journeys) not only provisions for themselves, but likewise their beasts.

determined unanimously to lay siege to Gibeah, and punish such daring offenders. This design would have been immediately put in execution, had it not been for the interposition of some of the elders, who proposed, that proper persons should be appointed to go to the principal people of Gibeah, and first demand of them the persons of those who had been guilty of such violence. If they readily delivered them up, they might punish them at discretion; but if they refused, they had then an undoubted right to do themselves justice by force of arms.

This advice being cordially received by the people, the messengers appointed went to Gibeah, and demanded the persons who had committed so flagrant a violence on the Levite's concubine. The inhabitants of Gibeah absolutely refused to deliver them up: they intimated that they wanted neither courage, skill, or numbers, and that they were determined to stand by each other in the cause of a common defence.

When the messengers returned with this answer, the Israelites were so enraged, that they all took an oath not to intermarry with any of the tribe of Benjamin; and it was resolved that a war should be carried on against them with the utmost vigour; but, previous to the marching of their forces, they consulted the Divine Oracle, not whether they should abide by their own resolutions, but only which of the tribes should lead the van. This step was very opposite to what they had before taken upon such emergencies, and arose from the over-confidence they had of their own strength, and the insignificance with which they looked upon that of the Benjamites. The answer, however, they received was, that the van should be led by the tribe of Judah.

In consequence of this the Israelites took the field with an army of 400,000 men. That of the Benjamites consisted of 26,000, besides 700 slingers, who were particularly distinguished for their abilities as marksmen.

The two armies met near Gibeah, when a dreadful encounter immediately took place, in which, 22,000 of the Israelites were slain, and night parting them, the Benjamites retired in triumph to their city, having, in the action, sustained a very trifling loss.

This unexpected disaster made the Israelites sensible of their negligence in not enquiring of God whether they should or not undertake the war. Wherefore, bewailing themselves of their misfortune, they again asked counsel of the Lord, who told them to go up against their brethren, but at the same time did not promise them any success.

The heedless Israelites, taking this for an assurance of victory, drew up their army the next morning before Gibeah, and again offered the Benjamites battle. Elated with their former success, the latter made a bold sally on the Israelites, and that with such success, that 18,000 more of them were slain on the spot.

This second defeat so intimidated the Israelites, that they broke up their camp, and went to Shiloh, where at this time was the Ark of the Covenant of God. On their arrival there they spent the whole day in weeping and fasting, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings to the Lord. After having thus regularly proceeded in their humiliation, they again enquired of God, whether they should make another attack on the Benjamites, or not. They were answered, by the mouth of Phineas, the priest, that they should, and that their endeavours should be crowned with success.

Encouraged by this intelligence, the Israelites prepared themselves a third time for attacking the Benjamites. To make their victory still more secure, it was resolved to place an ambuscade in a private spot near Gibeah, that when the battle was commenced, the main body of the Israelites, by feigning a flight, and thereby drawing the Benjamites from the city, those that laid in ambuscade should, by a signal given, immediately seize it, set it on fire, and destroy all the inhabitants.

This plan being concerted, the ambuscaders fixed themselves on the spot allotted in the evening preceding the day on which they intended making the attack. Early the next morning ten thousand choice troops of the Israelites appeared before Gibeah, who were no sooner seen by the Benjamites than (not doubting a repetition of their former success) they immediately sallied out of the place, and falling on the Israelites, killed about thirty. The Israelites now gave way and retreated, which being considered by the Benjamites as a mark of timidity, they eagerly followed. As soon as the army of the Israelites thought they had got that of the Benjamites at a proper distance from the city, they gave the signal that had been agreed on to the ambuscaders, who immediately entered the place, set it on fire, and put all the people to the sword.

When the main body of the Israelites saw this, they suddenly faced about, and charged the Benjamites with such fury that they were thrown into the utmost confusion, and began to think of saving themselves by retreating to their city. But when they beheld it in flames, they were driven to despair, and the only alternative was, either to submit to the mercy of the Israelites, or endeavour to secure themselves by flight. They determined on the latter, and hastened with the greatest precipitation to the wilderness. But this, instead of affording them safety produced their destruction; for being hemmed in between the main army, who pursued them, on one side, and the ambuscaders on the other, they were easily overcome, and the whole body put to the sword.

The number of Benjamites slain in the action and pursuit on this day amounted to 25,000, which was the whole of the tribe except 600, who happened to make their escape, and secure themselves

|| This was the same Phineas who had signalized his zeal for the glory of God on a former occasion. See page 100. Had this war been after the death of Samson (as placed in the Book of Judges) Phineas must have been upwards of 300

years old; but, as we have before remarked, its epocha was certainly between the death of Joshua, and the appointment of the first judge.

themselves in a fortress or rock called Rimmon, situate in a remote part of the wilderness. The Israelites not only destroyed the people, but likewise their cattle, and every thing of property that fell in their way.—Such were the dreadful consequences that took place from the obstinacy of the Benjamites, in not delivering up those who had committed so flagrant a violation on the person of the Levite's concubine.

When the Israelites began to reflect on the severity with which they had treated the Benjamites, and that the whole tribe were, in a manner, cut off from the main body, they repented of what they had done, and the more so, because, at the beginning of the war, they had all taken a rash oath not to marry their daughters to any of the Benjamites. Unhappy from this reflection they repaired to the tabernacle where the Ark of the Covenant was, and mourned the whole day, crying out, *O Lord, why is this come to pass, that there should this day be one tribe wanting in Israel?* And the next morning they arose early, built an altar, and offered on it sacrifices to the Lord.

Having done this, their next consideration was, how to recruit the tribe, which was, by themselves, almost rendered extinct. The oath they had taken not to marry their daughters among them could not be violated; and though there were 600 men of the Benjamites remaining, yet, without they were supplied with wives, the whole must, in time, be totally extirpated. To remove this evil, and accomplish their wishes, they at length bethought themselves of the following expedient.

When the war first broke out they had bound themselves by oath, to put all to the sword, who would not join them in the common cause against the Benjamites; and finding, on examination, that the people of Jabesh-Gilead had neglected to come, they dispatched 12000 men, with orders to put man, woman and child to the sword, except such virgins as were marriageable, whom they intended to give to the remaining Benjamites for wives.

The troops, having obeyed their orders on the people of Jabesh-Gilead, brought away with them four hundred virgins to the Israelites, who immediately dispatched messengers to the rock of Rimmon, to treat with the Benjamites, by offering them peace, and inviting them to return to the camp.

The poor Benjamites readily embraced the offer, and on their arrival at the camp, the Israelites gave them the Gileadite virgins for wives; but as the Benjamites were six hundred in number, there was not one for each man, and therefore, to supply this deficiency, they thought of another expedient, which was this:

Once every year there was a festival held at Shiloh, whither the young women of the country used constantly to come and dance. The Israelites, therefore, told those of the Benjamites who wanted wives, that they might, at this time, repair to the place, and, concealing themselves in the vineyards, seize on the young women as they came out to dance, and carry them off to their own habitations. *Behold, said they, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every*

man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, Be favourable unto them for our sakes; because we reserved not to each man his wife in the war.

The Benjamites paid a strict attention to these instructions, and, watching their opportunity, took every one a damsel away with them; so that, having, by these means, got themselves wives, they settled again in their own country, and, in the course of time, so increased, as to be little inferior, either in number or wealth, to their former situation.

The civil and intestine quarrels among the tribes being adjusted, the Israelites enjoyed a perfect state of tranquillity during the whole time of their being under the government of Othniel. But, after his death, wanting a leader, they returned again to a dissolute way of living, neither paying respect to the laws established by Moses, or their duty to God. This consequently produced confusion in their public affairs, which being taken notice of by Eglon, king of the Moabites, he marched against them with a considerable army. Several battles took place, in all which the Israelites were worsted, and their army being at length totally subdued, they became tributary to their conqueror, who erected a palace at Jericho, and kept them in the most abject state for the space of eighteen years.

At the expiration of this time the Israelites being thoroughly sensible of their misery, and earnestly desirous of shaking it off, addressed themselves, in the most solemn manner, to God, beseeching him to release them from the oppression under which they had so long laboured. The Almighty was pleased to listen to their prayers, and to raise them up a deliverer in the person of Ehud, the son of Gera, of the tribe of Benjamin.

Ehud was a wise, politic and enterprising man, and having observed the weakness of the Israelites from their eighteen years slavery, and how unable they were, by open war, to attempt any thing against their oppressors, he laid a scheme for taking off Eglon privately, knowing it would be much easier to deal with the Moabites when they should be in confusion for want of a leader, than while they were headed by their king.

During the subjection of the Israelites under Eglon, it was the custom every year to send a present or tribute to him, and for that year it happened that Ehud was appointed to go with it. He was a left-handed man, and being resolved to take this opportunity of either freeing his brethren from their oppression, or perishing in the attempt, he provided himself with a dagger, which he concealed on his right side, having the greatest strength in his left arm, and thus proceeded, attended by two servants, with the present to the king.

On his arrival at the palace he was immediately admitted into the presence of Eglon, to whom he gave the present sent by the whole body of the Israelites; having done which he told the king he had a matter to relate to him that demanded

manded the utmost privacy. On this the king bade him be silent till the company was gone, who being at length withdrawn, he retired with Ehud into a private apartment. As soon as the king had seated himself he asked Ehud the nature of his business, who replied he had a message from God. Surprised at this intelligence, and anxious to hear the contents of the message; Eglon suddenly arose from his seat, when Ehud taking advantage of the position in which he stood, drew the dagger from his side and plunged it into his heart. The force with which he gave the blow was so great that not only the blade but also the haft entered the body of the king, who being a very corpulent man, the fat of his belly so closed over the dagger that he could not draw it out.

When Ehud found the king was dead, he left him wallowing in his blood, and, shutting the door after him, made his escape, unobserved by any of the king's attendants.

It was some time after Ehud's departure from the palace before the death of the king was known, which of course gave Ehud the fairer opportunity of making an effectual escape. From the king's long stay the servants supposed he had retired to rest; and were therefore unwilling to disturb him; but at length their patience being worn out, and fearing that something particular might be the occasion of his long stay, they ventured to open the door of his apartment, where, to their great astonishment, they found him dead and wallowing in his gore.

In the mean time Ehud arrived safe at Mount Ephraim, where, assembling the people by sound of trumpet, he related to them the particulars of all that had passed, and told them to prepare themselves for war, and follow him; "for, said he, God hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into our hands."

The Israelites readily obeyed the command of Ehud, and, as a necessary preparation to their intended undertaking, secured all the passes from Moab towards the river Jordan. Having done this, they marched with all expedition to Jericho, and while the people were in the utmost confusion on account of the death of their king, they suddenly fell upon them, when great numbers were killed on the spot, and those who attempted to fly shared the same fate, the whole amounting to ten thousand men. Thus were the Israelites extricated out of the hands of the Moabites; and as Ehud was the principal instigator of their deliverance, they appointed him their

leader, which office he enjoyed, to the great satisfaction of the people, for fourscore years.

About the same time that Ehud relieved the Israelites in the eastern part of the country, those in the western parts, who had been for some time greatly molested by the frequent incursions of the Philistines, were extricated from their troubles by one Shamgar *, the son of Anath, a man of the most extraordinary strength and resolution. He engaged a body of the Philistines himself with no other weapon than an ox-goad, and, notwithstanding their great power, slew no less than six hundred, which so terrified the rest of the Philistines, that they desisted from any farther incursions on the territories of the Israelites, so that for some time they enjoyed a state of uninterrupted tranquillity.

After the death of Ehud, the Israelites, enjoying the blessings of ease and plenty, forgot their former servitude, and instead of paying a proper respect to their great deliverer and protector, indulged themselves in riot and dissipation. As a punishment for these impieties the Almighty was pleased to permit Jabin †, who at that time assumed the name of king of Canaan, and had fixed his imperial seat at Hazor, to conquer them, and to oppress them with the most unbounded severity, for the space of twenty years.

Jabin had made Sisera ‡ (an old and experienced soldier) general of his forces, who, besides having an abundance of other kinds of military ammunition, was provided with nine hundred armed chariots, and the troops under his command were a strong people, and inured to the fatigues of war.

The Israelites having been thus severely punished for their transgressions by a subjection to their most cruel and inveterate foes for the space of twenty years, the Almighty was pleased to interpose in their behalf, and to procure their releasement by means they little expected. It is to be supposed that at this time the Israelites, from the severity of their servitude, were so degenerated and dispirited, that they could not make choice of a man fit to be invested with sovereign authority; for which reason, in all probability, Deborah, a prophetess §, the wife of Lapidoth, is said to *have judged Israel at that time*.

This prophetess the Almighty was pleased to make the instrument of releasing the Israelites from the state of bondage under which they had so long laboured. By the Divine direction she sent for Barak, the son of Abinoam, a brave young

* Who this Shamgar was, or of what tribe we are not informed, though it is most likely he belonged either to the tribe of Judah, Dan, or Ephraim, those being situated the nearest to the borders of the Philistines. From the great slaughter he made with a weapon to all appearance so incompetent for the work, we may reasonably suppose that he was possessed of a Divine power, in like manner as Samson was when he slew a thousand of his enemies with the jaw-bone of an ass.

† Jabin was probably a general name for all the kings of this country, like that of Pharaoh among the Egyptians; for the king of Hazor, whom Joshua slew, was called by the same name. See Joshua xi.

‡ Josephus tells us, that Sisera was a great favourite with the king, on account of the services he had done in reducing

the Israelites, whom he worsted in several encounters, time after time, and would never give over the pursuit till he brought them at last to be absolute slaves and tributaries to his matter.

§ The words *prophet* and *prophetess*, in the Old Testament, sometimes denote persons endued with special, though not miraculous, gifts or graces, for the better understanding and explaining the word of God; and of this sort were the sons of the prophets, or such as were brought up in the schools of the prophets. As, therefore, we read of no miraculous action that Deborah did, she was, perhaps, only a woman of eminent holiness, prudence and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, by which she was singularly qualified to judge the people; that is, to determine causes and controversies among them, according to the word of God.

young prince of the tribe of Naphtali, whom she informed that it was the pleasure of the Lord that he should get together ten thousand men of the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun, and lead them towards Mount Tabor ||. That he might not be discouraged at these orders, she farther told him, that Sisera, the general of Jabin's forces, with his whole army and chariots, should fall into his hands, and that the Canaanites should be effectually subdued.

Barak, considering the inequality of their forces, and the greatness of the enterprize, thought it necessary to have the prophets with him, as it would not only encourage the men, but likewise be convenient for him to consult with her on any case of emergency. He therefore told her, that if she would accompany him he was willing to comply with her orders, but if not, he begged to relinquish the undertaking.

Deborah consented to accompany Barak, but at the same time pleasantly told him that, for his diffidence, he should not receive any honour from the enterprize, for that Sisera, Jabin's general, should fall into the hands of a woman.

As Barak's residence was at Kadesh, he, accompanied by Deborah, proceeded to that place, where, in a short time, he raised ten thousand volunteers from among the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali; and with these they marched with all expedition to Mount Tabor.

The appearance of so considerable a body of people, all under military discipline, and who had been so long in the most abject state of slavery, could not be long unnoticed by their oppressors. Accordingly, information of it being given to Sisera, he immediately drew out his forces, and taking with him his nine hundred chariots, made hasty marches from Harosheth, the place of his residence, passed the river Kishon *, and encamped at the foot of Mount Tabor, in hopes of cutting off Barak's retreat.

Barak was at first greatly alarmed at the formidable appearance of Sisera's army, but his fears were removed by the intrepidity of Deborah, who advised him not to wait till Sisera came up with him, but, early the next morning, to march his army down the hill, and immediately begin the attack, assuring him there was not the least doubt of his proving successful.

The Hebrew general followed the directions of Deborah, and, coming down on the enemy before they were aware, fell on them with such fury, that the whole army were immediately thrown into the utmost confusion. Prodigious numbers were slain on the spot, and such as fled, being closely pursued, shared the same fate; so that the whole body of forces was entirely cut to pieces.

Sisera, the general, was the only person who escaped the fury of the enraged Israelites during the battle. As soon as he discovered his whole army to be broken and dispersed, he quitted his chariot, and fled with the utmost precipitation till he came near the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite †, who no sooner saw him approach than she ran to meet him, and kindly invited him to shelter himself in her tent. Sisera readily accepted this offer, not apprehending the least danger from a woman, whose husband was the friend and ally of his master. The heat and fatigue of the day had made him exceeding thirsty, and therefore he entreated Jael to give him a little water; but instead thereof she gave him as much milk as he desired. He then told Jael he would lay himself down to rest, and strictly charged her, if, in the mean time, any person should make enquiry after him, she would secure his safety by denying his being there, or having seen any thing of him. When Sisera had laid himself down to rest, Jael covered him over with a carpet, and paid a strict attention to all his motions. Being quite jaded with the fatigues of the day, it was not long before he fell into a sound sleep, of which Jael embraced the opportunity of accomplishing his destruction. She took a long tent nail, and placing it to his temples as he lay on the ground, struck it with a hammer so forcibly, that it pierced through his head, and pinned him to the ground.

When Jael found that Sisera was dead, she left him, and went to the door of the tent, where she beheld Barak coming full speed in search of him. On his arrival she conducted him to the apartment where Sisera lay, and related to him the particulars of her having taken away the life of their most inveterate enemy.

This victory, with the successes that followed it, put an end to the oppression of the Israelites for

|| This is a very remarkable mountain situated in Galilee, near Kadesh, and in its neighbourhood were the territories at this time inhabited by the tribes of Zebulun, Issachar and Naphtali. It received its name from its eminence, because it rises up in the midst of a wide champaign country, called the Valley of Jezreel, on the Great Plain. Josephus tells us, that the height of this mountain is thirty stadia, and that on the top of it is a beautiful plain of twenty stadia in circumference. By all which it appears how commodious a place it was to be the rendezvous of Barak's forces, since it stood upon the confines of so many different tribes, was not accessible by the enemy's horses and chariots, and had on the top of it a spacious plain, where he might conveniently marshal and discipline his army. Mr. Maundrell, in his Travels, has given us the following very particular description of this celebrated mountain: "After a very laborious ascent (says he) which took up near an hour, we reached the highest part of the mountain. It has a plain area at the top, most fertile and delightful, of an oval figure, extending about two furlongs in length and one in breadth. This area is enclosed with trees on all parts except the south. It was antiently environed with walls and trenches, and other fortifications, of which some remains are still

"visible. From the top of the mount is a prospect which well rewards the labour of ascending it. It is impossible for man's eye to behold a higher gratification of this nature. On the north-west you see at a distance the Mediterranean Sea, and all round you have the spacious and beautiful plains of Galilee, which present you with views of many places memorable for the resort and miracles of the son of God. At the bottom of the mount, to the west, is a small village called Deborah, supposed to have received its name from the prophetess Deborah."

* This river has its source in Mount Tabor, and passing along the valley of Jezreel (now called the plain of Esdraelon) empties itself into the Mediterranean Sea.

† These Kenites, though they were proselytes and worshipped the true God according to the Mosaic law, yet being strangers by birth, and therefore having no right or title to the land of Canaan, they held it best policy, in these troublesome times, to observe a neutrality, and maintain peace, as well as they could, both with the Israelites and Canaanites. It was upon this footing that there was a peace between king Jabin and the family of Heber the Kenite; and that gave confidence to Sisera in his distress to fly to Heber's tent for protection.

for forty years, and proved the utter ruin of the Canaanites in this part of the country †. In commemoration of so singular an event, the prophetess Deborah composed a triumphant song, in which she magnifies the deliverance it wrought, by accounting the many calamities which the Israelites before laboured under; acknowledges its proceeding from the same Divine Being who descended in great majesty to give the law on Mount Sinai; calls upon all those, who partook of the benefits of it, to join in the praises of its great Author; commends those tribes that came readily to the war, and upbraids all those who declined the service of their country.

This song is contained in the 5th Chapter of the Book of Judges; and may be thus paraphrased:

Let Israel their Avenger's glory raise,
In lofty notes of everlasting praise!
Hear, O ye kings! attentive princes hear,
A wond'rous song that well deserves your ear.
When Israel's God from hostile Edom came,
With his own thunder arm'd, array'd in flame;
Trembled the earth, as o'er the clouds he rode,
The clouds dissolve, and own the incumbent
God.

The mountains tops at his approach retire,
Their molten entrails run in streams of fire.

O, how unlike those novel gods, and vain
Weak, unavailing names! no help they yield,
War, War the gates resound, and war the
field!

The alarm in vain is giv'n of spear and shield.
By their insulting jealous lords bereft,
No refuge but inglorious flight was left;
When Deborah arose at heaven's command,
When she arose to save the wretched land:
Bless'd be their names the gen'rous few that
join'd

To urge the happy change by heav'n design'd!
By counsel or by action, pen or sword,
To serve their country, and t'obey the Lord:
But curse ye Meroz! an uncommon weight
Of vengeance seize 'em, and a neuter's fate!
They wou'd the spoil, tho' not the danger
share,

When Sisera is fall'n, they'll then declare.
His boasts, his fruitless hopes, his fears are
o'er;

He bow'd, he fell, he sunk, to rise no more.
So let thy foes, O God, to dust descend,
But those that love thee brighter stars attend!

C H A P III.

The Israelites are afflicted with a famine. The story of Naomi and Ruth. The Israelites again fall into impiety, for which they are severely oppressed by the Midianites. God appoints Gideon to be their deliverer. He musters the tribes to march against them, and receives an omen of success. By the command of God he selects only a small number out of his army to go against the Midianites. He is encouraged in his undertaking by the relation of a dream. Obtains a complete victory over the Midianites. Is offered the government of the people, but refuses it. His death.

WHILE the Israelites were enjoying themselves in peace and plenty, after being restored to their liberty by means of Deborah and Barak, their felicity was interrupted by a dreadful famine, which raged with such violence as, in a short time, to carry off great numbers of the people. During this affliction many of them left the country, and retired to more remote parts, in hopes thereby of avoiding the dreadful consequences of so direful a calamity.

Among those that quitted their abodes on this occasion was Elimelech, a citizen of Bethlehem-Judah, who removed from thence with Naomi, his wife, and his two sons, named Mahlon and Chilion, to the land of Moab, where, after some time, Elimelech paid the debt of nature.

On the death of Elimelech, his two sons married two women of the country, the one named Orpah and the other Ruth, the former being espoused to Chilion, and the latter to Mahlon.

Naomi and her family lived very happy to-

gether for the space of ten years, at the expiration of which she received a severe stroke in the loss of her two sons, who both paid the debt of nature nearly about the same time.

The unhappy Naomi, being thus deprived of her husband and children, and left in a strange country, could not, with any satisfaction, stay longer in a place where she had met with such severe calamities. Having received information that the famine had subsided in her own country, she therefore resolved to return, and accordingly set forward for Judah, accompanied by her two daughters-in-law Ruth and Orpah.

After travelling some way, Naomi, thinking it hard to deprive her daughters of the society and converse of their relatives, endeavoured to persuade them to go back, and to convince them that her advice did not arise from any disgust, but merely out of respect to their future welfare, she gave them an affectionate blessing to this effect: "The Lord, said she, deal kindly with you, as you have done to me and mine; and grant
" that

† Josephus tells us, that immediately after this victory, Barak marched with his army towards Hazar, where he encountered king Jabin by the way, and slew him; having

done which he laid the city level with the ground, and afterwards governed Israel for forty years.

“ that ye may marry again to your satisfaction, and enjoy a happy settlement.”

Having said this Naomi gave each a parting kiss; but the girls were so affected, and their love for her so great, that they besought her to suffer them to accompany her. Naomi again endeavoured to dissuade them from their intentions, urging, that if they staid in their own country, they might marry again, which was a circumstance they could not expect should they go with her.

At length, Naomi's importunities so far prevailed, that Orpah, after shedding abundance of tears, took leave of her, and returned to Moab. But no persuasions could prevail with Ruth, who, in the most anxious and solicitous terms, begged she might accompany her. *Intreat me not, said she, to leave thee or return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go: and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.* Naomi, seeing the pious resolution of her daughter Ruth, pressed her no more to return, but taking her with her, they proceeded on their journey towards the land of Judah.

On their entering the city of Bethlehem, some of the people, who thought they recollected the features of Naomi, but were doubtful whether or not they were right, asked, with surprize, Art thou not Naomi, the wife of Elimelech? To which she replied, *Call me not Naomi §; call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified || against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?*

When Naomi and Ruth arrived at Bethlehem it was at the time of harvest, and Ruth, in order to obtain sustenance for herself and mother-in-law, begged she would permit her to go into the fields to glean some corn. Naomi assenting, Ruth went on the business, and after being some time in the fields, she was accosted by a servant of Boaz, (the master of the land, and a very wealthy person belonging to the family of Elimelech, Naomi's deceased husband) with whom she had some conversation. A short time after Boaz came into the field himself, and seeing Ruth, enquired of his servant who she was, and from whence she came. The servant, who had learned from her the particulars of her life, and present situation, related the whole to Boaz, who was so pleased with her for the respect she shewed her mother-in-law, that he gave her not only full liberty to glean in his fields, but likewise ordered that she should be allowed both food and drink in common with the reapers, giving them a strict charge not to offer her the least molestation.

Ruth, surprized at this unexpected civility from a stranger, returned her thanks with the

most profound respect and acknowledgment of her benefactor's courtesy. *Why, said she, have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?*

Boaz told her he had heard of her affectionate carriage to her mother-in-law, and that she was come with her into a strange country, out of a pious design to be under the care and protection of the God of Israel, whom he solemnly prayed to recompence her good actions, and give her a prosperous and ample reward. It being then dinner-time, he made her sit down at his own table, and when he left the field gave a strict charge to his servants that they should be particularly civil to her, and give her the opportunity of gleaning the more, by purposely dropping some of the corn.

Thus did Ruth continue to glean in Boaz's field, to very great advantage, the whole day, at the close of which she returned with great satisfaction to her mother-in-law. As soon as Naomi saw her, and beheld the great quantity of corn she brought with her, she was struck with amazement, and asked her by what means she became so successful. Ruth told her in whose field she had been gleaning, and related every particular circumstance that had occurred during her absence.

When Naomi understood who the person was that had been so great a benefactor to Ruth, she told her he was a near kinsman, and being a man of a pious and liberal disposition, he might propably extend his benevolence to their mutual advantage. She therefore advised Ruth to prosecute her labours, and to attend in the fields, with the servants of Boaz, during the remainder of the harvest.

Ruth readily followed her mother's advice, and attended every day, with the greatest diligence, till the harvest was completed, during which time she not only brought home a prodigious quantity of corn, but likewise provision, always reserving the greater part of her daily allowance for the benefit of her mother-in-law.

The harvest being over, Naomi, studious to recompence this tender affection of her daughter-in-law, concerted a scheme in what manner to bring about a marriage between Ruth and Boaz, whose singular civility she might reasonably suppose proceeded from some other motive than that of common courtesy or humanity. She told Ruth that Boaz was her near kinsman, and, after informing her what the law of Moses required in such case, advised her to wash, anoint, and dress herself, and then go to Boaz's barn, where she would find him winnowing his corn: that she should be careful to conceal herself till he had supped, and was gone to rest, when she should go gently into the barn, and quietly lay herself down at his feet.

Ruth, ever obedient to the commands of her mother-in-law, immediately prepared herself to the best advantage, and going to the barn, she placed

§ The word *Naomi*, in the Hebrew language, signifies *happiness*, and *Mara*, *sorrow*.

|| The former part of this story expresses what Naomi means by the *Lord's testifying against her*: she went out full,

that is, happy in a husband and two sons; but returned deprived of all, a distressed and wretched widow, worn with care, with poverty, and old age.

placed herself so conveniently, that she could see all that passed, without being noticed herself. When Boaz had supped, he laid himself down by a heap of corn to rest*; and when Ruth thought he was asleep, she entered the place, gently raised the cloathes that covered his feet, and laid herself down by him.

About midnight Boaz awoke, and finding somebody by him, asked with surprize, who it was. To which Ruth replied, *I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt † over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman ‡.*

Boaz was so far from being offended at what Ruth had done, that he highly approved of her conduct. *Blessed, said he, be thou of the Lord; for thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. And now, fear not: I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.* He then told her, that though, indeed, he was a near kinsman, yet there was another nearer, to whom he must give the preference, because it was his right, and that he would communicate the matter to him the next morning: If he chose to marry her he might, but if he refused, she might rest assured he would marry her himself.

Having said this, Boaz told Ruth to stay with him the remainder of the night, which having done, she, to obviate any reflection that might be thrown on her character, arose early the next morning, and departed. But, that she might not go empty-handed to her mother, Boaz gave her six measures of barley, with which Ruth returned to her mother, who joyfully received her, not only on account of the present, but the kind treatment she had received from Boaz. After being informed of all that had passed, Naomi advised Ruth not to take the least notice of it to any person whatever, but patiently to wait the event, assuring her that Boaz was a man of honour, and would perform his promise.

It was not long before Ruth found her mother's prediction verified; for Boaz, punctual in the performance of his promise, went the next morning to the gate of the city, which, in those

days, was the usual place of judicature. Here he met with the kinsman he had mentioned to Ruth, and summoning ten others of the heads of the city, he, in their presence, told his kinsman, that Naomi, who was come back from the country of Moab, had a parcel of land to dispose of that belonged formerly to Elimelech her husband, of which he gave him this public notice, that, if he thought proper, he might redeem it §, the right of redemption belonging first to him.

The kinsman readily consented to redeem the land: but when Boaz told him, that at the same time he must likewise take Ruth the Moabitess to wife, to raise up the name of her dead husband on his inheritance, he declined the business, giving this for a reason: "that he could not do it on those terms, without destroying the inheritance he already possessed." He therefore willingly resigned his right of redemption to Boaz, who, without any scruple, accepted it, and his kinsman, according to the custom of those times, in token of relinquishing, or transferring his right, took off his shoe ||, and delivered it to Boaz.

The kinsman having thus publickly given up that right which he had the opportunity of claiming, and Boaz readily accepting it, the latter made this public declaration to the elders, and all the people present: *Ye are witnesses, said he, this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's, and Mablon's, of the land of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mablon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren. Ye are witnesses this day.*

The whole assembly not only unanimously acknowledged the justice and equity of this transaction, but also added a hearty prayer, wishing that Ruth might prove as fruitful as Rachael and Leah, from whom originated the House of Israel.

The marriage being celebrated, in the proper course of time Ruth conceived, and brought forth a son, whom she named Obed. This

Obed

* It evidently appears that this was a temporary kind of rest, and that Boaz reposed here only for a time on the present occasion; lying down in his cloaths, and not going, as usual, to his house and bed: and possibly Naomi, knowing this to be the custom, might therefore make choice of this opportunity for effecting her purpose.

† This was a proverbial manner of speaking, signifying in general, *take me under thy protection*; and in particular, *take me under thy protection as a husband*. Even to this day it is a ceremony among the Jews for the man to throw the skirt of his *talisb*, or *veil*, over his intended spouse, and particularly to cover her head with it.

‡ Here we find that Ruth, in her answer, subjoins the reason of her request; and to judge properly concerning it, we must, in a great measure, divest ourselves of modern ideas, and consider not only the manner of those times, but the light in which a state of widowhood and celibacy was considered among the Jews. Ruth, a proselyte to the religion of that nation, was full of those expectations which animated the pious women among them; and the sequel of this story fully proves that her expectations were not ill grounded.

§ The reason of this seems to be grounded upon the law,

by which the first-born of such a marriage was to bear the name of the woman's former husband, in order to keep up his name in Israel; so that if this kinsman had married Ruth, and should have had but one son by her, that son being not to bear his name, but the name of her former husband, he himself would have no son to keep up his name in Israel; so that not being willing to run this hazard, he declined the purchase.

|| This was the manner of confirming bargains, sales, exchanges, and alienations, among the Israelites. It consisted of two sorts; the first of which was penal, as when a man refused to marry the wife of his brother, who died without issue: in this case the law commanded, that the woman should take off his shoe, and spit in his face, at the same time using these words: *Thus shall it be done to the man that refuseth to raise up issue to his brother's family*. The second was cessionary, or in token of resignation, and did not extend to the compelling of the kinsman in the second, third, or fourth degree, to marry the widow, but he might transfer his right to any other of the kindred; and as a sign of his cession or translation of his right, he took off his shoe, and delivered it to that kinsman who would marry the widow in the presence of the elders.

Obed was the father of Jesse, and grand-father of David, of whom, according to the flesh, came the Saviour of the World ‡.

During the wise and virtuous administration of Deborah and Barak, the Israelites enjoyed the blessings of peace; but, soon after the death of their leaders, they fell into their old impieties, which so offended the Almighty, that, as a proper punishment, he was again pleased to deliver them into the hands of their enemies.

The Midianites were a people situated on the east side of the river Jordan, whom the Israelites, in their way to the land of Canaan, had almost totally destroyed; but some of them saving themselves by flight into other countries, and returning after the Israelites were settled in Canaan (which was a space of near two hundred years) repossessed the land they had formerly inhabited, became exceeding numerous, and still retained the name of Midianites.

These people, assisted by their neighbours the Amalekites, together with some Eastern nations, made war on the Israelites, whom they conquered, and kept in the most wretched state of subjection for seven years. So dreadful was their situation, and to such a degree were they oppressed, that they were obliged to betake themselves to the mountains, and to dwell in caves and fortified places, from whence, as the spring came on, they stole out to cultivate and sow their land; but all to no purpose: for, towards the time of harvest, their enemies made inroads into the country, and, having destroyed the increase of the earth, and killed all the cattle that fell into their hands, they returned home, leaving the wretched Israelites destitute of almost every article necessary for their support.

After undergoing this severe treatment for the space of seven years, the Israelites began seriously to think that this was a punishment inflicted on them by Divine authority, for their manifold transgressions; and that the only expectations they could have were, having recourse to the Lord, acknowledging the evil they had committed, and beseeching him to pardon them. They accordingly addressed themselves, in the most fervent manner, to God, who was pleased to send a prophet § to expostulate with them on the impropriety of their conduct, the ingratitude they had shown in return for the many favours received, and the just punishment that had at-

tended them for their repeated disobedience to the Divine Will. The expostulation made them still more sensible of their crimes, and prepared them for the due reception of the Blessing God was about to confer, in sending them a deliverer in the person of Gideon, the son of Joash, who dwelt at Ophrah ||.

At this time Gideon was threshing out his corn in a private and unsuspected place, the better to conceal it from the depredation of the enemy. While he was thus employed in providing sustenance for his family, the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and signified the purpose of his message, which was, that God had made choice of him as the deliverer of his people.

Astonished at the extraordinary messenger, and the purport of his errand, Gideon replied, *If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where are all his miracles, which our fore-fathers have told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt? But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.*

The Angel, looking stedfastly at Gideon, said, "Be courageous, and thou shalt save Israel from the hands of the Midianites. Is it not I that sent thee?"

But Gideon, considering his own inabilities, and the low condition of his family, compared with the presence of him who spoke to him, answered, "In what capacity am I to serve Israel, since my family is but poor in the tribe of Manasseh, and myself the least among them."

To remove this apology, and to give Gideon some encouragement, the Angel said, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites with as much ease as if they were but one man."

In consequence of this promise Gideon, in some measure, shook off the doubts he had conceived, and began to entertain some shadow of hope; but, desirous of being assured that the person who conversed with him was a Divine agent, he replied, "If now I have found favour in thy sight, be pleased to shew me some token, whereby I may know that it is thou the angel that talkest with me. Wherefore, depart not hence, I pray thee, till I return with my offering, and set it before thee."

The Angel not seeming to refuse the invitation, Gideon hastened away, and having boiled a kid, and made some unleavened cakes, he spread a table,

‡ The Book from whence this story is taken receives its name from the person who is the principal object in the History of it, namely, *Ruth*, and, in the Holy Bible, is inserted between the end of the Book of Judges and the first of Samuel, though the occurrences, no doubt, took place about the time we have recorded them. Its subject is entirely unconnected with the History of the Israelites, and is therefore made a distinct treatise. It is, indeed, of so private a nature, that, at the time of its being written, the generality of the people might have thought it not worth recording; but we Christians may plainly see the wisdom of God in having it done. It had been foretold to the Jews, that the MESSIAH should be of the tribe of Judah, and it was afterwards revealed farther, that he should be of the family of David: And therefore it was necessary, for the full understanding of these prophecies, that the history of the family of David, in that tribe, should be written before these prophecies were revealed, that there might not be the least

cause for suspicion of the justness of those incidents that were afterwards to occur. And thus this Book, these prophecies, and the accomplishment of them, serve to explain, and illustrate each other.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology.*

§ Who this prophet was we are not informed. St. Augustine supposes him to be that angel who soon after appeared to Gideon; but others, with greater probability, suppose him to have been some person endued by God with the spirit of prophecy, and sent to the Israelites as other prophets were accustomed to be.

|| Gideon was of the family of Abiezer, of the tribe of Manasseh; and the place where he dwelt, called Ophrah, was situated in the boundaries belonging to the half tribe of Manasseh, on the west side of the Jordan; for which reason it is called Ophrah of the Abiezrites (Judges viii. 32.) to distinguish it from another Ophrah, that belonged to the tribe of Benjamin.

a table, and set them before him. Having done this the Angel ordered him to take them from thence, place them on a neighbouring rock, and pour the broth over them. However strange this might appear to Gideon, he strictly obeyed the orders of the Angel, who no sooner touched them with his staff, than immediately there issued fire out of the rock, which consumed them, whilst himself, at the same time vanished out of sight.

Gideon, convinced by this miracle, that it was a messenger from heaven who had appeared to him, began to fear (as the notion then was) that he should not long survive it, and, in despair, thus exclaimed: "Alas! my Lord God! because I have seen an angel face to face, I shall die." But the angel, (though Gideon could not see him) to remove his imaginary apprehensions, bid him not fear, for he should yet live. In commemoration of this gracious interview, Gideon erected an altar, which he called *Jehovah-shalom*, that is, *the Lord of Peace*.

The same night Gideon, in a dream, received orders to destroy the altar of Baal, which his father, in those corrupt times, had caused to be erected, and to cut down the groves that surrounded it; to build an altar to the Lord his God on the top of the rock, and to offer on it his father's second * bullock, which was seven years old, as a sacrifice, using the wood of the grove for the performance of the ceremony.

Gideon made not the least hesitation in complying with these orders; but considering it would be difficult to do it in the day-time, he resolved to do it by night; and, therefore, taking ten of his servants to assist him, he first cut down the grove, then destroyed the altar of Baal, and erected another in its stead, fully performing all that he had been commanded.

The next morning, when the people understood that Gideon was the person who had put this affront upon Baal, they assembled together, and demanded him of his father that they might put him to death. But Joash, instead of complying with their request, told them, that if Baal was a God, it was *his* business, and not *theirs*, to avenge the injury he had received †. This answer appeased the people, and Joash ever after called his son Jerub-baal, which signifies *the Opposer of Baal*.

It was now about the time of year when the Midianites and their associates were accustomed to come and plunder the territories of the Israelites. They accordingly assembled together in

great bodies, and passing the river Jordan, encamped themselves in the valley of Jezreel.

Notwithstanding the formidable appearance of this numerous army, Gideon, being encouraged by Divine impulse, summoned all those of his own family to take up arms first, and then sent messengers to the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, exhorting them immediately to assemble and join him, in order to shake off the yoke of the Midianites under which they had so long laboured. The different tribes readily obeyed these orders, and assembled in such numbers, that, in a short time, Gideon's army amounted to 32,000 men.

As soon as each tribe's complement of men were arrived, Gideon (being willing to satisfy them that he did not act upon his own head, but was the person appointed to be their deliverer) begged of God to give them some sign of his commission; and then made choice of these tokens: That, upon his laying a fleece of wool on the ground, the dew might be on the fleece only, and the earth round about it dry. This request was complied with, for the next morning the fleece only was found to be wet, and that to such a degree as, on being squeezed, to produce a bowl full of water. Gideon then requested that this token might be reversed, that is, that the fleece should be dry, and the ground wet; which accordingly came to pass ‡.

Not only Gideon, but likewise all the people, being fully convinced, by these signs, that it was the will of God he should be the deliverer of the people, Gideon marched at the head of his army towards the camp of the enemy, who then lay in the plains of Jezreel.

After proceeding some way they halted at a place called the Well of Harod, where the Almighty (to prevent, in case of conquest, their vainly imputing the victory to their own courage or numbers, and not to his assistance) was pleased to order Gideon to make proclamation throughout the camp, that whoever was afraid, or diffident of success in the undertaking, should have liberty to lay down their arms, and return to their respective habitations.

In consequence of this proclamation no less than 22,000 quitted the expedition, so that only 10,000 remained, which was a very considerable number compared with that of the enemy.

As the people might still think it was possible that even these 10,000 might obtain a conquest, and therefore impute the merit to themselves, God was pleased to reduce their number, and make

* This bullock is thought, by the Rabbies, and others, to have been called the *second* from the stall in which it stood and was fed, which was the second in order of place; and being as many years old as the Israelites had been under subjection to the Midianites, the destroying this bullock might, in some measure, prefigure the breaking off the Midianitish yoke from the neck of Gideon, whose name signifies a *breaker* or *destroyer*.

† It is generally supposed that Gideon's father had been a worshipper, if not a priest, of Baal; and therefore it is not unlikely that he had at this time been convinced by his son, that God had given him a commission to recover his people, and root out idolatry; and this made him appear with such courage in his son's cause, because he knew it was the cause of God.

‡ The first of these miracles was certainly very striking;

but in order to obviate any objection drawn from the quality inherent in wool to imbibe moisture, Gideon humbly requested that the miracle might be reversed, and the wool being dry, notwithstanding the ground round about it was wetted by a copious dew, contrary to its known quality of imbibing moisture, was such a miracle as must make the deepest impression on his confederates. Various are the mystical interpretations which commentators have given to these circumstances. Some have supposed that they represented, on the one hand, the children of Israel reduced by the Midianites, and on the other, their being restored to the Divine favour. The fathers say, that by the fleece covered with dew is understood the Jewish nation, favoured with the Divine grace in the midst of people left by God to themselves.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



GIDEON'S

SACRIFICE

consumed by Fire on being touched by the Staff of the Angel.

make it still more inconsiderable, which he did by the following expedient. He ordered Gideon to lead the soldiers down to the water to drink, where he would give him a signal, what men to preserve, and which discharge. Gideon obeyed these orders, and received from God this signal: that those who took up water in their hands, and lapped it, should go with him; but such as laid themselves down to drink should be dismissed. Gideon paid a strict attention to their motions, when it appeared that out of the 10,000, only 300 lapped the water, in consequence of which the latter were preserved, and the remainder immediately dismissed.

With this small army Gideon, by the Divine command, prosecuted his march, and encamped near the river Jordan, at a small distance from the enemy. But the nearer he approached the more his courage failed him. However, his fears were soon removed by the interposition of the Almighty, who, that same night, told Gideon to take with him a servant, and go privately to the enemy's camp, where he should hear something that would animate and give him courage.

In obedience to this injunction Gideon went, taking with him a servant named Phurah. They arrived at the camp unperceived, and approaching one of the tents heard a soldier relate to his comrades the following dream: *Behold*, said he, *I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley tumbled into the host of Midian, and came into a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along.* One of the soldiers, who had paid great attention to the relation of this dream, interpreted it as follows: *This*, said he, *is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.*

As soon as Gideon had heard this dream, and its interpretation, he was inspired with new courage, and after praising God with the most humble adoration, returned with his servant to the camp, where he related to the people every circumstance that had occurred during his absence. He then put his men in proper order for battle, dividing them into three companies of an hundred each. After this he gave to each man a trumpet, and a pitcher with a burning torch in it, charging them to follow him, observe his motions, and, as they saw him act, so must they, to a man, do the like.

Having thus disposed of this little body of men, Gideon, putting himself at the head of them, marched towards the enemy's camp, whither he had no sooner arrived than he gave the signal by breaking his pitcher, taking the lighted torch in his hand, and sounding his trumpet. All the rest followed his example, and (as had been previously concerted) at the same instant, cried out, *The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.*

It being in the dead time of night § when this sudden alarm was given, the enemy, on hearing so many trumpets, and seeing such a number of lights at once, supposed themselves to be attacked by a very formidable army. They, therefore, in the midst of their fright (being composed of different nations) knew not one party from the other, and instead of falling on the Israelites, destroyed each other, so that the whole was a general scene of the most complicated confusion.

Gideon took a proper advantage of the disorder of the enemy, who, to save themselves, had immediate recourse to flight. Having killed great numbers on the spot, Gideon dispatched messengers to the rest of the army, (who, on his proclamation, had withdrawn themselves) ordering them to pursue the routed enemy, and secure the passes of the river Jordan, to prevent their retreat. They obeyed the orders as far as lay in their power, but it being impossible to secure some of the passes, a part of the enemy's troops crossed the river; upon which Gideon, with his three hundred men, pressed hard after them, while the other part of his army destroyed those who staid behind. Among the slain were two Midianitish princes, named Oreb and Zeeb, whose heads they cut off, and sent to Gideon, as a proof of their services. By the same messengers they expressed their disapprobation of Gideon's engaging in a public act of hostility without their knowledge in very angry and severe terms; but they were appeased by the answer returned by Gideon, who told them it was not his war, but God's, by whom he was commanded to act as he had done, and that therefore he did not claim any merit to himself.

In the mean time Gideon, with his small party, pursued the fugitives with great vigour till they came to Succoth, where, being faint and weary, they halted. Gideon requested of the inhabitants some refreshment for his people; but the princes of Succoth, knowing he was in pursuit of two other Midianitish kings, named Zebah and Zalmunna, who, with 15000 men, were fled to Karkor, refused complying with his request, and instead thereof ridiculed him on account of the smallness of his army, and in derision asked him, whether he was so secure of victory over the princes he pursued as to demand relief of them? This unmannerly and inhospitable treatment so incensed Gideon, that he told them, if the Lord gave him success against Zeba and Zalmunna, on his return he would make them repent their incivility. He threatened the inhabitants of a town called Peniel in like manner, they having also refused giving him the least assistance.

This uncharitable treatment did not in the least dismay the intrepid Gideon, who, with his small army, continued the pursuit, fatigued as they

§ The time mentioned in the text is, *in the beginning of the middle watch.* Though the Romans, in after-ages, divided the night into four watches (Matth. xiv. 25.) yet, in the Eastern parts, and, in more antient times, it consisted but of three, whereof the first began at *six*, and continued four hours. The *second* is therefore called the *middle watch*, and began at *ten*; so that we may suppose it was some

time after this that Gideon alarmed the Midianitish camp; and the reasons why he chose this part of the night to do it in are obvious, because the trumpets would then seem to sound louder, and the lights to shine brighter, and thereby both increase the consternation of the enemy, and conceal the smallness of his own army.

they were, till they came to Karcor, where the two Midianitish princes, with their rallied forces, lay thoughtless of danger. But Gideon availing himself of the advantage of their supposed security, surprized and defeated them, taking their two kings prisoners. Having done this he returned in triumph, with his captive princes, to Succoth, where he executed that vengeance on the people he had threatened for their inhospitality. He called together the chiefs of the place, who were seventy-seven in number, and after severely upbraiding them for their conduct, ordered them to be crushed to death under briars and thorns. Nor was he less sparing to the inhabitants of Peruel, whom he ordered to be put to the sword, and then demolished the fortifications of the place.

The two captive princes, Zeba and Zalmunna, had, in their march, laid all the country waste, and put many to the sword, otherwise Gideon was inclined to have shewn them some mercy. Understanding, however, by their own confession, that they had slain his brother at Tabor, he determined to inflict on them the just punishment they deserved for their merciless cruelty. He therefore ordered his son Jether immediately to fall upon them; but as he was a youth, and seemed somewhat timorous, Gideon dispatched them with his own hands, having first ordered them to be stripped of their royal ornaments, and their camels of the rich furniture with which they were dressed.

Thus were the combined armies of the Midianites and Amalekites totally defeated and the poor Israelites relieved from their wretched state of bondage. These great and glorious actions,

in defence of his country's liberty, raised Gideon's name to such a height, that the people flocked to him from all parts, and voluntarily offered to settle the government on him and his family. But Gideon, well knowing the honour of this victory was not due to him, but God alone, modestly and generously declined their offer in words to this effect: "I will not," says he, "rule over you, neither shall my son, but the Lord shall rule over you. Yet, to let you see I do not slight your kindness, I will request one thing of you; and that is, that you will give me the ear-rings of your plunder."

To this they all readily consented; and spreading a garment on the ground, they threw into it the ear-rings, which, by weight, amounted to 1700 shekels of gold, besides the rich ornaments and robes of the kings, with the gold chains that were upon the necks of the camels.

Of this gold Gideon made an ephod^{||}, and placed it in his own city of Ophrah, as a monument of his singular victory, though in after-times it came to be perverted to a bad use, gave occasion to a fresh apostacy among the people, and proved the ruin of Gideon's family.

Though Gideon did not chuse to accept of the government of the people, yet they had no other ruler for the space of forty years, during which time they lived in an uninterrupted state of tranquillity. At the expiration of this time Gideon died at a very advanced age, and his remains were deposited in Ophrah, the place of his nativity.

C H A P. IV.

Abimelech, a natural son of Gideon, wickedly obtains the government of Shechem. Jonathan, (his younger brother) gives a parable to the people on Mount Gerizim. The Shechemites revolt from Abimelech. Gaal is appointed to the government in his stead, but afterwards divested of his dignity, and banished. Abimelech lays siege to Thebez, where he is killed by a woman throwing a large stone on his head. Tolah and Jair succeed to the government, after the deaths of whom the people apostatize and are oppressed. On their subjection they receive manifest tokens of the Divine favour. Jeptbtha is vested with the command of the Israelites army against the Ammonites. He makes an extraordinary vow. Defeats the Ammonites, and afterwards suppresses an insurrection among the tribe of Ephraim. He dies, and is succeeded by three other leaders, namely, Ibzan, Elon and Abdon.

GIDEON, at the time of his death, had no less than seventy sons born in lawful wedlock, besides one, named Abimelech, by a concubine. This last, immediately after his father's decease, being of an aspiring disposition, made use of the most horrid means to obtain the government over the people to whom he belonged. He went to the relations of his mother at She-

chem, and told them that, as his father was dead, it would certainly be much better for the people to be governed by one person than seventy, meaning his legitimate brothers; and at the same time put them in mind that he was of their family and kindred.

The relations of Abimelech, considering this might prove advantageous to themselves, approved

^{||} The Ephod was the upper garment, which the priest wore upon his shoulders, but by the gold being used in

making it, must be included all the sacred ornaments that necessarily belonged to it.

proved of the proposition, and communicated it to the heads of the Shechemites, who, closing with the project, set about the necessary measures to advance Abimelech to the government. They furnished him with a considerable sum of money out of the treasury of their idol Baal-berith, with which he hired a set of men to attend him, whom he knew to be the most abandoned in disposition, and willing to engage in any enterprize, however inconsistent with laws either human or divine.

With these ruffians Abimelech repaired to his deceased father's house at Ophrah, where, having, with the assistance of his company, seized all his brethren (except Jotham the youngest who made his escape) he slew them all upon one stone*; after which he went to Shechem, and, notwithstanding the cruelty he had committed, was, in a general assembly of the peoples, elected their king†.

When Jotham was acquainted with the murder of his brethren, and the promotion to which the inhuman Abimelech was advanced, he went to the top of Mount Gerizim, (which overlooks the city of Shechem) and there delivered a parabolical speech‡, wherein he represented to the people his father's modesty in refusing to have the government settled on him and his family, which they had now conferred on one as much

inferior in virtue and honour to Gideon and his lawful sons, as the bramble was to the olive-tree, the fig-tree or the vine. He then expostulated with them on the injury done to his family, upbraided them with their ingratitude, and appealed to their own consciences for the propriety of their conduct. "If (says he) ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands: (for my father fought for you, and adventured his life for, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian: And ye are risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his servant, king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother.) If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal, and with his house this day; then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you: But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech."

After Jotham had thus delivered himself to the people, he retired, and fled to a place called Beer§, situated in the mountainous part of the country,

* It is supposed by some that what is here called a stone was an altar, dedicated by Abimelech to the idol Baal, and erected in the same place where his father Gideon had before destroyed the altar of Baal, to recompence the disgrace done by him to that idol.

† In this choice there were neither the call of God, nor the consent of the people; for Abimelech was not appointed king by the body of the Israelites, but a few disorderly seditious Shechemites, without the knowledge of Judah or the other tribes; and reigned only in Shechem.

‡ This is the first example we meet with of the use of parables to set forth the most serious matters, and the most interesting truths. The Greeks pretend to have been the inventors of this mode, but there is nothing more absurd than their vanity in this respect. A long time before Æsop, and every other author known to their nation, the Orientals, and particularly the Hebrews, made use of this ingenious manner; for the doing of which two reasons may be assigned: 1. Because men would suffer themselves to be reprehended under this guise, when they would not digest plain words. And 2dly, Because they heard them with delight and pleasure, and remembered them better than any grave or common discourse.

The parable delivered by Jotham on this occasion (together with its explanation) is as follows:

The trees went forth on a time, to anoint a king over them, (so that anointing was in use many years before the first kings of Israel) and they said unto the olive-tree, Reign over us. But the olive-tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, (because oil was offered in sacrifice to God, and fed the lamps of his house, besides all the other uses wherein it was serviceable unto man) and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig-tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig-tree said unto them, should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, (an apt representation of that content, and fulness of pleasure, which may be enjoyed in a private life, and cannot, without folly, be exchanged for the troubles and cares that men meet with in the management of public affairs) and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheareth God and man, (wine, as well as oil, was used both in Jewish and Heathen sacrifices) and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, (the meanest of all trees, good for nothing but to be burnt, and therefore fitly representing Abimelech, from whom the Shechemites could ex-

pect no manner of benefit, but a great deal of trouble and vexation) *Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If, in truth, ye anoint me king, then come and put your trust in my shadow; (an apt emblem of Abimelech's ridiculous vanity, to imagine, that he should be able to maintain the authority of a king any more than the bramble could afford a shadow or shelter) and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.* (Words that carry a lively image of Abimelech's ostentatious spirit, and menaces to take severe vengeance on the nobles of Shechem, such as the house of Millo, who had been chiefly instrumental in his promotion, in case they should desert him.) This is the parable, the whole intent and meaning of which was, to convince the Shechemites of their folly in chusing a man for their king, who was no more able to protect them than a bramble was to cover other trees that should resort to it under the shadow of its branches.

The manner in which Josephus makes Jotham express this parable to the people is as follows: "There was (says he) a time when the trees had meetings together, in order to regulate the government of the vegetable part of the creation, and to appoint one to rule the whole. In a council held on this occasion the major part of the plants were for having the fig-tree to govern; but the fig-tree declined the honour, being sufficiently satisfied with the esteem it bore for its fruit. On this the trees applied to the Olive and the Vine, both of which likewise refused, for the same reason as had been given by the fig-tree. At length they applied to the Bramble, who said, If you are in earnest I'll willingly take upon me the government; but remember, you must rest quietly under my shadow. If you prove refractory, there shall come a fire out of me that shall destroy you.—This, said Jotham, is not a tale to divert you, but to make you reflect on your absurd conduct, in violating your sacred obligations to Gideon, by suffering Abimelech, the murderer of the children of your deliverer, to usurp, and tyrannize over you. This Abimelech is the very fire I have told you in the fable."

§ The city of Beer was situated on the northern frontiers of the tribe of Judah, and the people not acknowledging Abimelech as king, Jotham knew he could remain there in safety. Mr. Maundrell, in his journey to Aleppo, tells us, that Beer is very pleasantly situated on an easy declivity fronting the south. That at the bottom of the hill is a fountain of excellent water from which it received its name; and that, on the upper side, are the remains of an old church built by the empress Helena.

country, where he secreted himself till the death of his cruel brother Abimelech.

Within three years after this the curse denounced by Jotham on Abimelech and his party began to take place. He ruled over the people in so tyrannical a manner, that they were little better situated than when in the hands of their professed enemies. He abided by no other law than that of his own will, and even acknowledged himself an enemy to common justice.

This severe treatment opened the eyes of the Shechemites, who not only dethroned Abimelech, but would likewise have taken away his life, had he not, accompanied by his vile companions, and their adherents, saved himself by flying to the mountains.

It happened at this time to be the season for gathering in the grapes; but the people had such terrible apprehensions of the cruelty of Abimelech (who had vowed revenge against them) that they durst not go into the fields to reap their vintage. In this distressed situation they applied to one Gaal (a prince of the country who had lately come to Shechem with a body of armed men) to protect them, who readily complying with their request, they invested him with that dignity they had before bestowed on Abimelech.

Thus protected, the Shechemites reaped their fruits, and carried them home in safety; and when elated with liquor (which arose from their joy in being secured against the power of their late tyrant) they took the freedom, in a very liberal manner, of aspersing the characters of Abimelech and his adherents.

In the mean time Gaal took every necessary precaution to prevent any future attempts that might be made by Abimelech to reinstate himself in the government of the people. He erected fortifications in different parts of the city, and kept his men in such order as to be ready for action on the most sudden alarm.

While matters were in this situation, one Zebul, a principal man among the Shechemites, and a great friend to Abimelech, sent him the particulars of Gaal's conduct, and the disposition of the people. He advised Abimelech to plant some of his men in ambush near the city, and told him he would persuade Gaal to come out and engage him, whereby he would have the opportunity of getting his enemy into his own power, and that he did not doubt but he should be able to reinstate him as governor of the people.

In consequence of this information Abimelech, after the close of the day, planted a number of men in different divisions at some distance from the city. Gaal had made Zebul his chief officer, and these two were parading the suburbs, during the night, as usual; but when the morning opened, and Gaal saw men in armour approaching, he called aloud to Zebul, telling him, that men in battle array were advancing towards the city. Zebul told him he was mis-

taken, for that what he saw was nothing more than the shadow of the mountains. But Gaal, on their nearer approach, insisted they were not shadows, but a real company of armed men. Upon this Zebul accused Gaal of cowardice, and rebuked him for having vaunted in his own valour, and spoken disrespectfully of Abimelech. *Where, said he, is now thy mouth, wherewith thou saidst, Who is Abimelech that we should serve him? Is not this the people that thou hast despised? Go out, I pray now, and fight with them.*

In consequence of this, Gaal, finding his courage put to the test, marched against the enemy, and received the first shock; but thinking himself too weak, and having lost several of his men, he retreated, and saved himself by making a precipitate retreat into the city.

Zebul took advantage of this circumstance in favour of his friend Abimelech. He represented to the people the great cowardice of Gaal, and that it was solely by means of his conduct that they were obliged to fly from the enemy. This had the desired effect, for the minds of the people became so prejudiced against Gaal, that they not only took from him the government, but likewise banished him from the city.

In the mean time Abimelech, being informed that the citizens intended going into the fields to prosecute the gathering of the vintage, he placed his men in ambuscade near the city to surprize them. Accordingly on their first coming out he detached two thirds of his army from the rest, with orders that they should take possession of the gates of the city, and by that means cut off the retreat of those who had left it.

As soon as Abimelech's detached party thought it a proper time, they made their appearance, which so terrified the defenceless Shechemites (who by this time had got a considerable distance from the city) that they attempted to save themselves by flight, but being closely pursued, the greater part of them were put to the sword.

In the mean time Abimelech, at the head of the rest of his army, laid siege to the city, which they took on the first assault, the inhabitants immediately consulting their own safety by flight, though, in the attempt, many were slain. After Abimelech had thus routed the Shechemites, and made himself master of the city, he ordered it to be levelled with the ground, and, as the last insult of triumph, had salt* sown on those parts where the walls had stood.

Those of the Shechemites who had escaped the rage of Abimelech, gathered themselves into a body, and for some time secreted themselves in a strong tower; but not thinking themselves sufficiently safe here, they left it, and took sanctuary in a cluster of strong holds, belonging to the temple of their idol Berith. Intimation of this being given to Abimelech, he immediately marched at the head of his men to the place, which was surrounded by a grove of lofty trees. On his arrival at the spot he took an ax in his hand,

* The strewing of salt was an old custom used on those cities whose inhabitants had been guilty of treachery. Not that the strewing of salt could be supposed to have been done to dry up or render the soil barren, there being no occasion for

that in an inhabited town, but to shew the detestation in which the inhabitants were held for their conduct, and that the place, on that account, should never after be rebuilt, but remain unpeopled and desolate.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



JUDGES II—46.

THE FUGITIVE SHECHEMITES

*Burnt and suffocated in the Holds of their Idol Berith,
by order of King Abimelech.*

hand, and commanding the men to follow his example, cut off a bough from one of the trees, which he laid on his shoulder, and the men doing the like, they carried them to the holds, laying a pile at the mouth of each. Having done this Abimelech ordered the piles of wood to be set on fire, which being done, every creature of the wretched Shechemites perished in the flames, the whole number, men and women together, amounting to one thousand.

Abimelech, not yet satiated with revenge on the Shechemites, marched with his army against Thebez, which, being thinly inhabited, and but slightly fortified, he took by assault. The inhabitants endeavoured to save themselves by retreating to a strong castle within the city, which being observed by Abimelech, he advanced with his men to the place, resolved either to reduce them to subjection, or destroy them by setting the tower on fire. But his cruel intentions were happily frustrated by means of a woman, who, while he was standing near the walls giving direction to his men, threw down a large piece of a mill stone, which falling on Abimelech's head, struck him to the ground. When he came a little to himself, and found the wound was mortal, he called for his armour-bearer, whom he desired immediately to dispatch him, that it might not be said he fell by the hands of a woman. The armour-bearer obeyed his orders, and when the soldiers found their leader was dead, they dispersed, every man retreating to his own habitation.—Thus did the Almighty, in his abundant righteousness, punish both Abimelech and the Shechemites according to their deserts; and, within the space of three years after their crimes were committed, made them the instruments of each others destruction.

After the death of Abimelech, and the re-establishment of the Shechemites, one Tolah, the son of Puah, an eminent man of the tribe of Issachar, was appointed leader of the people, in which office he continued for twenty-three years. He dwelt, during the whole time of this government, on Mount Ephraim, near the center of the country, that the people might, with the greater convenience, resort to him for judgment. Though there is not much recorded of his person, yet we may reasonably suppose he was a prudent and peaceable man; that he reformed abuses among the people, endeavoured to suppress idolatry, appeased tumults, and healed those wounds which had been given to church and state during the usurpation of Abimelech.

Tolah was succeeded by **Jair, a Gileadite**, of the tribe of Manasseh. He was a man not only happy in his worldly acquisitions, but also in his family. He had no less than thirty sons, each of whom was head of the respective cities in which they resided: they were all men of courage, and, with their father, universally esteemed by the people. Jair held the government twenty-two years, when he died at an advanced age, and was buried in Camon, a city of Gilead.

During the life of Jair the Israelites paid a proper attention both to the civil and ecclesiastical laws of their country; but after his death they degenerated in their manners, and gave themselves up to idolatry. They not only wor-

shipped Baal and Ashtaroah, as they had frequently done before, but likewise adopted the idols of the neighbouring nations, namely, the Syrians, Zidonians, Ammonites, Moabites, and the Philistines.

These great enormities so offended the Almighty, that, as a punishment for their sins, he was pleased to permit the Philistines and Ammonites to invade them on all quarters, and to keep them in a state of subjection for the space of eighteen years. Nor did these people make their incursions only on the tribes that were situated on the east side of the river Jordan; but, passing the river, gave the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim, no small molestation, and, by their fundry defeats, made them sensibly feel the weight of their power.

The Israelites, finding themselves not able to cope with such powerful enemies, grew sensible of their folly, by which they had provoked God thus to punish them, and therefore, acknowledging their sins, humbly besought him once more to pardon them, and suffer them to be again restored to his Divine favour. But God rebuked them, in very severe terms, for their ingratitude, and to increase the pungency of their present affliction, bade them call to the gods which they had chosen, and try if they would deliver them in the time of their distress.

This was a most cutting reproof to the Israelites, who, to recover God's favour and protection, immediately set about a reformation. They renounced all their idols, and betook themselves to his service in good earnest; whereupon his mercy returning with their repentance, he soon pointed out the means of effecting their deliverance.

At that time there was, in the half tribe of Manasseh which settled on the east side of Jordan, a man of note among his people, whose name was Gilead, of the family of that Gilead, the son of Machir, to whom Moses gave the city of Gilead, from whence the family took their name. This man had several sons by his wife, and one, named Jephthah, by a concubine. After the death of Gilead, his legitimate sons, being then grown up, expelled Jephthah as having no right of inheritance with them. In consequence of this he set out to seek his fortune, and after travelling some days, at length settled in the land of Tob. Being a man of great courage and intrepidity, he was soon made captain of a small army, with whom he frequently made excursions into the enemies country, and sometimes brought off considerable spoils.

The Ammonites had now raised a very considerable army, with a design (as was supposed), not only to invade the country of Gilead, but to lay siege to the capital. On the other hand, the Gileadites were resolved, if possible, to defend their country, and for that purpose got together what forces they could; but their great misfortune was they had not a proper person whom they could appoint as general, till at length a thought occurred which appeared likely to remove this difficulty.

They had heard of the great fame of Jephthah, and in what manner he had signalized himself, on various occasions, against the enemy: they therefore resolved to send to him an offer

offer of the command of their army, and in consequence of this resolution messengers were immediately dispatched for the purpose.

Jephthah, surprised at this, asked the messengers, how they could expect any succour from him who had been expelled his father's house, and thereby obliged to seek protection in another part of the country. They acknowledged that his brethren had treated him with unjustifiable severity, but, as they were in great distress, and had heard of his distinguished fame as a warrior, begged he would forgive and forget what was past, and contribute what assistance lay in his power to the whole body, by taking upon himself the command of their army against the Ammonites.

After repeated importunities Jephthah at length agreed to accept the command; but upon this condition, that if he happened to prove successful in the war they should establish him their governor for life. Their necessity was so pressing at this time that they readily consented; upon which Jephthah went with the messengers to Mizpeh, where the covenant, or agreement, made between him and them, was solemnly ratified and confirmed in the presence of all the people.

This matter being adjusted, and Jephthah appointed to the command of the whole army of the Gileadites, he sent ambassadors from Mizpeh to the king of the Ammonites, to demand the reason of his invading the country of the Gileadites. The answer returned by the Ammonitish king was, that the land was his; that the Israelites, in their passage from Egypt, had taken it from his ancestors, and that he was now determined to recover it.

In consequence of this Jephthah sent other ambassadors, with orders to tell the king of Ammon, that if either conquest or prescription conferred a title, the Gileadites had a just right to the country they possessed, since they took it not from them, but the Ammonites: that they had quietly enjoyed it upwards of three hundred years; and that they were determined to oppose any monarch, however powerful, that should attempt to make an infringement on their property.

The king of the Ammonites returning an haughty answer to this message, and there appearing no likelihood to come to any kind of treaty, all farther thoughts on that head was laid aside, and each party made the necessary preparations for determining the contest by the sword.

Jephthah, having made every necessary preparation, marched at the head of his army towards that of the Ammonites. When he came within sight of the enemy he made a halt, and prayed to God, in the most fervent manner, that he would grant him success in his undertakings. He then made a most solemn vow to God, that if he should prove victorious he would offer up to him in sacrifice the first living creature he should meet with on his return to his family. *If, says he, thou shalt deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands; then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of mine house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Am-*

mon, shall surely be the Lord's; and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.

O may my arms the God of battles bless,
And grant his own lov'd Israel wish'd success;
And when from war with conquest I return,
Whate'er I meet, a sacrifice I'll burn.

Having made this solemn vow, Jephthah marched his army against the Ammonites, whom he attacked with such success, that, in a short time, they were totally routed. Prodigious numbers were slain on the field of battle, and the remainder, being unable to make the least resistance, endeavoured to save themselves by flight, but being closely pursued were all put to the sword.

Animated by this conquest, Jephthah marched his army against the principal places belonging to the Ammonites, and in the course of a short time, destroyed twenty cities, together with their inhabitants, laying the whole country waste wherever he went. Thus did he reduce the power of the Ammonites, and extricate his countrymen out of those troubles under which they had so long laboured from so potent an enemy.

The war being over Jephthah returned to his family, when, lo! instead of receiving that satisfaction he expected after so long an absence, a circumstance occurred that pierced him to the heart. On approaching his house, the first object that presented itself was his only daughter, who came flying, with eager joy, to receive and bid him welcome.

When Jephthah saw his daughter, his soul almost sunk within him, and for some time he was unable to speak:

He saw the maid, and like a statue stood,
Pale was his alter'd face, congeal'd his blood.

Having a little recovered himself, he looked at her with tears trickling from his cheeks, rent his cloaths as a testimony of his affliction, and after blaming her for her officiousness in coming to meet him, told her the vow he had made, by which he had obliged himself to offer her up to God as a sacrifice.

My daughter!—longer mine, alas! no more!
Thy cruel duty we must both deplore:
The word which can't be chang'd to God is
past,
Thou now art his, this day must be thy last.

The innocent victim did not appear in the least alarmed at this melancholy intelligence, but with great coolness replied, "If thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; only permit me this indulgence, that I may go up and down upon the mountains for two months to bewail my virginity, I and my fellows."

Jephthah readily complied with this request, and at the expiration of the two months she returned to her father, who did with her according to the vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, that

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



JUDGES, XV. 15.

*- SAMSON slaying the PHILISTINES
with the jaw bone of an Ass. -*

that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year †.

The great success Jephthah had met with in reducing the Ammonites was productive of a civil war between the tribes of Ephraim and Gilead. The Ephraimites were naturally a quarrelsome and ambitious people, and being jealous of the great fame of Jephthah, they assembled themselves together, and demanded of him why he went to war with the Ammonites without consulting them, threatening, at the same time, that they would set fire to his house, and destroy him and his family.

In answer to this Jephthah told them, they could not be insensible of the oppression under which their allies had so long laboured, and that they had been applied to for their assistance, but refused giving it. That they had acted with the greatest injustice, and if they did not content themselves and be quiet, he would compel them to it by force.

The remonstrance and threats of Jephthah were of no avail, for the Ephraimites, instead of paying any attention to them, raised all the forces they could, and prepared themselves for battle. In consequence of this, Jephthah, at the head of his troops, marched against them, and as soon as the two armies met a desperate battle ensued, in which Jephthah became victorious, great numbers of the Ephraimites being slain on the field, and the rest put to flight.

To make this conquest the more secure, and to prevent the Ephraimites from attempting a disturbance of the like nature at any future time, Jephthah ordered all the passes of the river Jordan to be secured, and that such of the fugitive Ephraimites who came thither with an intent to ford it should be put to the sword. That the people appointed to secure the passes might know whether such as came where Ephraimites or not, he ordered them to make every person speak the word *Sibboleth* †, which if they were unable to do, and instead of sounding it properly, called it *Sibboleth*, they might then depend on it they were Ephraimites, and should therefore immediately put them to the sword.

These orders being strictly attended to an-

swered the intended effect, for, the Ephraimites could not speak the word properly, but, leaving out the *b* in the first syllable, called it *Sibboleth*, which small variation cost them their lives. In the action, and by these means, no less than 42,000 of the Ephraimites were put to the sword; and Jephthah, having thus reduced his refractory brethren, returned in triumph to Gilead, where he was received with great applause by the whole body of the people.

Jephthah, having thus, through the Divine assistance, signalized his valour in a series of successes, both against foreign and domestic enemies, spent the remainder of his life in peace; but this was of short duration, for after governing the people only six years he paid the debt of nature, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead, his native country.

After the death of Jephthah, the government was vested in the hands of one Ibzan, a citizen of Bethlehem, and of the tribe of Judah, who, the sacred historian informs us, had thirty sons and as many daughters. He enjoyed the high office in which he was placed only seven years, when he died at an advanced age, and was buried at Bethlehem.

Ibzan was succeeded by Elon, of the tribe of Zebulun, who governed the people ten years, during which time nothing material occurred. He died and was buried, at Aijalon, a principal place belonging to the country of Zebulun.

Elon, was succeeded by Abdon, the son of Hillel, of the tribe of Ephraim. He was universally beloved by the people, after governing of whom for eight years, he died at a very advanced age, leaving behind him no less than forty sons and thirty nephews. He was buried with great funeral pomp in the city of Pirathon, the place of his nativity.

These are all the particulars mentioned by the Sacred Historian relative to these three last Judges; and the reason of his being so particular in taking notice of the number of their issue is, to shew, that the government, at that time, was not hereditary, but placed in the hands of such as were best approved of by the people.

C H A P.

† The singular vow made by Jephthah, with the circumstances that attended it, have occasioned no small controversy among the learned. The doubt is whether Jephthah offered up his daughter for a burnt-offering, or consigned her to the public service of God. It appears from the text that Jephthah's daughter was not sacrificed, but devoted to the Lord. It is plain, that in many cases his vow could not have been executed; for, suppose, on his return, that a dog, or any other unclean animal, had first met him, he must not have used it as a burnt-offering, the law of Moses having strictly prohibited such sacrifices. Besides, if Jephthah was under a necessity of offering his daughter, who was to be employed in that disagreeable task? The priests were commanded to do all in their power to deter the people from the commission of so abominable a practice: the magistrates well knew that such sacrifices were strictly forbidden by God himself, and, certainly no person will imagine that Jephthah could be capable of undertaking so inhuman an office. Upon the whole, therefore, it appears that she was not sacrificed, but devoted to the service of God; which opinion is confirmed by the sacred historian himself in the two following passages:

And she knew no man. This expression itself is a sufficient proof that she was not sacrificed; for otherwise it would have been superfluous to say, that after the vow was performed, she knew no man.

The daughters of Israel went yearly to lament, &c. The original word which we render *lament*, is open to different significations. By some it is translated *to talk with*; by

others, *to praise*. If we adopt the first, it is a demonstrative proof that she was alive, and therefore the young women went, at certain seasons, to condole with her on her misfortune, and to give her such comfort as laid in their power. If we adopt the latter, the sense will be, that they went to praise the virtue of her, who, in the midst of her father's afflictions for the miserable condition to which his rash vow had subjected her, did all in her power to assuage his grief, by assuring him that she submitted to the will of God with the utmost resignation, and that though a state of perpetual virginity was the greatest punishment that could befall an Israelitish woman, (who generally placed her greatest happiness in the expectation of the Messiah springing from her) yet even this she would cheerfully undergo, rather than he should falsify the oath he had made.

† The word *Sibboleth*, in the Hebrew, has two senses, namely, *an ear of corn*, and *floods of water*. It is used here in the latter sense; and the test which the Gileadites put the Ephraimites to was, bidding them say, "Let me pass over the water." The pronunciation of words of the same language vary greatly in different parts. An Athenian spoke Greek as different from a Dorian, as a northern man speaks English from an inhabitant of the south. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Ephraimites could not pronounce the word in the same manner as those did who inhabited the countries on the other side the Jordan. St. Peter was known to be a Galilean by his accent in the court of Pilate's palace. See Matth. xxvi. 73.

C H A P. V.

The Israelites are oppressed forty years by the Philistines. An angel appears to the wife of Manoah, and promises her a son. Birth of Sampson. Gives an instance of his remarkable strength by killing a lion. Marries a woman belonging to the Philistines, and propounds a riddle of a very singular nature to the people assembled on the occasion. Is angry with his wife for having disclosed the meaning of the riddle, and leaves her. He slays thirty of the Philistines. Goes to his father-in-law's house to seek his wife, but is refused her on account of her having been married to another person. He burns the Philistines corn. He is bound by the men of Judah, and delivered to the Philistines; but breaketh his bands, and killeth 1000 of them with the jaw-bone of an ass. He carrieth away the gates of Gaza. He falls in love with Dalilah, by whom he is betrayed, and delivered into the hands of the Philistines. They put out his eyes, and confine him in prison. His last exploit, and death.

DURING the administrations of Ibzan, Elon and Abdon, the Israelites enjoyed a life of perfect ease and tranquillity for the space of twenty-five years. But, after the death of the latter, they relapsed into their old impieties, the consequence of which was, that God permitted them to be invaded and oppressed by the Philistines for the space of forty years, at the expiration of which they were happily relieved by the following incidents.

There was a certain man, named Manoah, of the family of the Danites, whose wife long laboured under great affliction of mind on account of her continuing barren, and her husband was no less uneasy for want of issue. This woman used frequently to retire to some private spot, where she addressed herself to God, beseeching him to remove the unhappiness of her mind by making her fruitful.

At length, after repeated solicitations, the Almighty was pleased to listen to her request, and to send an angel to her with this message: *Behold, said he, thou art barren and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive and bare a son. Now, therefore, beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine, nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing, for lo, thou shalt conceive and bare a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines.*

Surprized, but at the same time pleased, at this supernatural intelligence, the woman hastened home, and related to her husband all that had been told her by the angel. Manoah was so struck with the description his wife gave of the figure of the angel, that he earnestly besought of God that he would be pleased to vouchsafe him a sight of the same heavenly messenger. The Almighty graciously condescended to comply with this request, the angel again appeared when Manoah and his wife were together, and repeated the instructions he had given to the woman when alone.

As the angel appeared in human shape, Ma-

noah took him to be a common man, and therefore asked his name; after which as a compliment for the satisfactory intelligence he had given him, he entreated him to stay and partake of an entertainment he would instantly provide. The angel advised him to express his gratitude by offering a sacrifice to the Lord; upon which Manoah prepared a kid, with a meat-offering, for the purpose, and performed the ceremony on an adjoining rock. Though the angel had hitherto thought proper not to make himself known to Manoah, he now, on this occasion, convinced him who he was; for no sooner did the fire arise from the sacrifice (by which he was standing during the whole time of its being prepared) than he ascended with the flame, to the distinct view of Manoah and his wife, and gradually disappeared.

When they both beheld this they immediately prostrated themselves on the ground, well knowing that the person with whom they had been conversing was no other than a messenger sent from God. Manoah was so impressed with fear, that, after recovering himself a little, he exclaimed, *We shall surely die, because we have seen God.* But the woman, armed with more reason and courage than her husband, argued with him thus: *If (said she) the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would, as at this time, have told us such things as these.*

A short time after this the woman became pregnant, and, at the expiration of nine months, was delivered of a son, whom they named Samson, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *robust, or strong.* By the consequences that followed, it is reasonable to suppose that Samson's parents strictly observed the directions given them by the angel; for, whilst he was a child, the Lord blessed him, so that he possessed a degree of strength uncommon to children of the like age. And while he was but a youth the Spirit of the Lord began to move him; at certain times, to exert himself in actions of strength and

and activity, in the camp of Dan §, between Zorab and Eshtael.

When Samson was arrived at the age of maturity, his inclinations led him to travel, in order to take a view of the different parts of the country. While he was on one of these excursions, he arrived at a place called Timnath, a city belonging to the Philistines. Pleased with the situation he made a short stay in the place, during which he became enamoured with a beautiful young woman, the daughter of a reputable citizen, and his passion was so great for her, that he was determined, if possible, to take her to wife; but at the same time he would not effectually proceed till he had first asked the consent of his parents. He accordingly returned home with the greatest expedition, and having described to them to what a degree he was struck with the person of the beautiful Philistine, besought their permission to marry her. The parents expostulated with him on the unreasonableness of his request, urging the impropriety of his forming so close an alliance with a person who belonged to an uncircumcised family. But the amorous youth, consulting his passion, more than his religion, pressed so hard, that his parents (whose fondness for him made them grant every indulgence in their power) at length assented, and went with him to Timnath to treat with her parents on the marriage, and to attend the celebration of the nuptials.

In the course of their journey to Timnath, it happened that Samson had strayed at some distance from his parents, when all on a sudden he espied a young lion, who had come out of the vineyards of Timnath, running towards him with great fury. Notwithstanding this alarming sight, Samson was not in the least intimidated, but standing his ground, as soon as the lion came up with him, he immediately seized him, and such was the great power of his strength (given him from above) that he dispatched the beast with as much ease as if it had been a kid. Having done this he threw the carcase into a ditch, and then followed his parents, but did not take the least notice of the adventure that had happened during his absence.

On their arrival at Timnath Samson's parents went to those of the damsel with whom their son was so extravagantly enamoured, and a treaty of marriage was formed to the satisfaction of both parties; after which Samson and his parents returned home, the former waiting, with eager expectations, for the day that was to crown all his wishes, and make him, as he thought, one of the happiest of beings.

The time fixed for the nuptials being near at

hand, Samson and his parents, again set out for Timnath. In their way Sampson, remembering the place where he had encountered with the lion, was induced by curiosity to go to the spot, in order to see what was become of the carcase. When he came to the place, he found, to his great surprize, a swarm of bees in the skeleton of the beast, together with a quantity of honey, some of which he took, and following his parents, eating of it as he went, gave a part to each, but did not tell them from whence he had it.

On their arrival at Timnath every necessary preparation was made for celebrating the nuptials, and the day appointed when the anxious Samson was to be possessed of his fair and beautiful partner. It was the custom, in those times, to continue the nuptial entertainment for seven days, and, to do the bridegroom greater honour, his wife's relations had brought with them thirty of their prime youths to bear him company. In the course of the first day, when harmony and cheerfulness appeared universal among the whole assembly, Samson addressed himself to the thirty young men, telling them he had a riddle || to propound to them, and if they could explain it before the expiration of the seven days, he would give them thirty suits of cloaths, and an equal number of shirts; but if they could not, they were to forfeit the like to him. The Philistines accepting Samson's proposition, he gave them the riddle as follows: *Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.*

The Philistines used their utmost efforts, for six days, to find out an explanation of this riddle, but their endeavours proving fruitless, and despairing of accomplishing it before the expiration of the time, they knew not what to do, till at length they bethought themselves of the following project. On the morning of the seventh day, they went to the new bride, and threatened her, if she did not get the secret from her husband, and reveal it to them, they would set the house on fire, and burn both her and her father. Intimidated at these threats the woman sat about the business, and after great difficulty obtained from Samson the particulars of his killing the lion, and the honey he found in the carcase; all which she privately communicated to the Philistines.

Towards the close of the seventh day, which was the time appointed for expounding the riddle, the Philistines assembled before Samson, one of whom, in the name of the rest, said to him, *What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?*

By

§ The camp of Dan meant here was propable that place where the Danites pitched their camp in their expedition and enterprize against Laish; for it is not likely that the Philistines, who had the Israelites at that time under entire subjection, should suffer them to have any standing camp. And, if the Reader looks back a little, this is another proof that the story of Micah, and of the Danites expedition against Laish, was transacted long before the time of Samson, though, by the compilers of the Bible, they are related after.

|| It was a very antient custom for the masters of feasts to propose enigmas to their guests, in order to exercise their

wit, and enliven conversation, instead of passing the whole time in downright eating and drinking. The Greeks derived this custom from the Orientals, and they generally proposed a reward to those who expounded the riddle. It was the custom, likewise, as we are informed by Josephus, for the sages of those times to send or offer riddles to each other, as a trial of sagacity, to the exposition of which rewards and penalties were annexed; so that the present of a riddle was only the stratagem for a booty. The mysterious cover to this kind of wisdom made it be always considered as the most high-prized accomplishment.

By these questions Samson was fully convinced that his wife had discovered the secret to the Philistines. He knew he had not told it to any other person, and therefore, to shew them he was sensible that some foul means had been used to acquire an explanation of the riddle propounded, replied with indignation, *If you had not plowed with my beifer, you could not have expounded my riddle.*

But notwithstanding this deception, Samson was determined to fulfil his engagement; to effect which, in the heat of his passion, he went to Ashkelon*, a city of the Philistines, where, having slain thirty men, he took their cloaths, and gave them to those who had expounded the riddle.

Fired with resentment at the unfair measures taken by the Philistines, Samson suddenly left his wife at Timnath, and went home to his father's house. But though he conceived a just indignation against the people who had so imposed on him, by artfully procuring an explanation of the riddle, he still retained a fondness for the object through whose means they had acquired it, not so much imputing the discovery to her weakness, as to their artifices.

When Samson's resentment was somewhat abated, and his anger appeased, he returned to Timnath to visit his wife, and as a token of affection took with him a kid for a present. But, to his great surprize, when he came to her father's house he was denied admittance to her apartment, the father giving this as a reason; that, presuming he had quite forsaken her, he had married her to one of the thirty companions who attended the wedding feast, and had expounded his riddle: however, he told him, that he had another daughter, who was younger and much more beautiful, and that if he chose to accept of her, she was at his service.

This answer was far from satisfying Samson;

but he did not imagine the affront so much to arise from the conduct of his father-in-law as from the general contrivance of the Philistines. He therefore turned short, and returned home, vowing revenge against the whole body of the people; and it was not long before he put his design into execution.

It happened to be near the time of harvest, and the corn being ripe and fit to cut, Samson hit upon a project for destroying it, and thereby distressing the Philistines by famine. He got together three hundred foxes†, and tying them two and two by the tails, with a lighted torch between each pair, he turned them loose, when running into the fields they not only destroyed all the corn, but likewise the vines and olive trees, so that the whole of the surrounding country appeared, for a time, in one continued blaze.

It was not long before the Philistines understood who was the author of this destruction, and supposing that Samson had been induced to take such a step in revenge for the treatment he had received from his wife's family, a large body of them went to Timnath, and, seizing Samson's wife, together with his father-in-law, burnt them alive, as being the original causes of so great a calamity.

This circumstance farther irritated Samson against the Philistines, and so far was he from concealing his resentment, or using any private means to be revenged on them, that he openly declared he would have satisfaction. Nor did he fail of keeping his word, for, taking a convenient opportunity, when a body of the Philistines were assembled together, he suddenly fell on them, and such was his amazing strength and activity, that few escaped with their lives.

Samson, being conscious that so rigorous a procedure must inflame the already incensed Philistines, resolved to secure himself from the consequences

* This city was situated between Azoth and Gaza, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, about 520 furlongs distant from Jerusalem. It is said to have been of great note among the Gentiles in antient times for a temple dedicated to Dicroto, the mother of Semiramis, here worshipped in the form of a mermaid: and for another temple of Apollo, where Herod, the father of Antipater, and grand-father of Herod the Great, served as priest. It had, in the first times of christianity, an episcopal see; and in the course of the holy wars it was beautified with a new wall, and many fair buildings, by Richard I. king of England.

† This circumstance has occasioned no small controversy among different commentators, and many have thought it difficult to believe that Samson could get together so great a number of these animals. But the following observations will clearly point out, that the circumstance is far from being incredible, or any way open to that ridicule which the enemies to Scripture History have thought proper to throw on it.

In the first place we are to consider (as the learned Bochart, from the accounts of several travellers) evinces, that the whole country, especially that part of it which belonged to the tribe of Gad, so abounded with foxes, that they have been seen in herds of two or three hundred together, and from them several places took their names: that the manner of catching them was not (as we may imagine) by hunting only, but by snares and nets; and that Samson did not do this by himself in a day or a night, but that, being assisted by his servants and neighbours (as he was a man of considerable eminence in his country) he might possibly be some weeks in accomplishing his design.

In the second place the matter will appear far from being romantic, when we consider (as the Roman History informs)

what collections have been made of creatures much wilder and rarer than foxes. As for instance: Lucius Sylla, when he was Prætor, ordered to be shewn, on the Amphitheatre, an hundred lions; Julius Caesar, when he was Dictator, four hundred; and that the emperor Probus, at one spectacle, exhibited a thousand ostriches, a thousand stags, an hundred Lybian, and an hundred Syrian leopards, with an infinite number of other strange creatures: and why then should it be thought to be a thing so incredible, as to need the intervention of a miracle (as some contend) for Samson, with the assistance of his friends, who might be let into his design, to get together, in some time, three hundred foxes, in a country that every where abounded with them?

Foxes, it is well known, are very apt to do a great deal of mischief wherever they abound, and therefore Samson might have this farther design in collecting so many, viz. that thereby he might clear his own country of such noxious animals, and at the same time he very well knew, no creature could be more convenient for his purpose of annoying, and detriming his enemies: for, as these creatures are very swift of foot, and have a natural dread of fire, they could not well fail (when once they were turned into it) of setting the standing corn in a blaze, and then, as they were tied in couples, tail to tail, this would make them draw one against the other, and being thereby retarded in their flight, and staying longer in a place, they would give the fire more time to spread itself, and at length occasion an universal conflagration.

Upon the whole, therefore, it appears that the mustering up such a number of foxes, in order to burn the Philistines corn, was a thing far from being impracticable, more especially when we consider the number of people Samson had to assist him in the execution of his design.

sequences of their resentment; and therefore retired to the top of the rock Etam†, which was situated in a part of the country belonging to the tribe of Judah.

When the Philistines understood where Samson had secreted himself, a considerable body of them marched into Judah, and encamped at a place called Lehi, situated at a small distance from the rock Etam. From hence they sent ambassadors to the principal inhabitants of the place, demanding of them the person of Samson, on whom they sought revenge for his having made such destruction not only on the produce of their country, but likewise its inhabitants.

In consequence of this, the Israelites, thinking their own situation exceeding dangerous, immediately dispatched an armed force to Samson's retreat, with orders to bring him from thence that he might be given up to the Philistines.

On their arrival at the place, they told Samson their business, informed him to what a degree the Philistines are enraged against him, and pointed out the danger to which they were exposed on his account. *Knowest thou not*, said they, *that the Philistines are rulers over us? what is this that thou hast done unto us?* To which Samson replied, *As they did unto me, so have I done unto them.* They then told him he must answer for his own conduct, and that if he did not chuse to go with them quietly, they had orders to bind him and take him by force, for that the Philistines were so enraged, that, unless he was delivered into their hands, the whole body of the Israelites would fall victims to their resentment.

Samson was not insensible of his own strength, but he did not chuse to exert himself against his countrymen. He therefore not only complied with their request in leaving the place of his security, but likewise agreed to be bound with cords, on condition they would do him no farther hurt than delivering him into the hands of his enemies. He accordingly left the rock, and being brought bound to the ambassadors, they conducted him to the camp of the Philistines, who no sooner saw him at a distance, than they ran in considerable bodies to meet him, exulting at their supposed conquest over so daring an invader.

But Samson soon convinced them of the impropriety of their imaginations. As soon as

they came near him, he suddenly snapped the cords with which he was bound, and seeing the jaw-bone of an ass lying on the ground he took it up, and, falling on the Philistines, slew no less than one thousand on the spot, which so intimidated the rest, that, instead of attempting to make any resistance, they betook themselves to flight §.

Fatigued with this encounter, and being excessive thirsty, Samson sought for water, but found himself in a place where no such refreshment was to be had, without some miraculous interposition. In this distressed situation he made his supplications to God, beseeching him to grant him some relief in his present exigency. *I have* *hast given* (said he) *this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?* His Divine Protector was pleased to listen to his complaint, by immediately causing a stream of delicious water to issue from an hollow rock adjacent to Lehi, wherewith Samson allayed his thirst, and was revived; and from this event the place was called En-hakkore, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies, *the well of him that prayed.*

After this singular conquest Samson looked upon the Philistines with contempt; and not fearing any hurt they could do him, he went openly into one of their cities called Gaza, where he took up his residence in a house of public entertainment. The governor of the town being acquainted with Samson's situation, resolved to have him seized and put to death. He therefore placed guards without the gates of the city, giving them orders that if they should find he was about to leave the place, which it was most likely he would either some part of the night, or very early the next morning, they should immediately seize and confine him.

But Samson having, by some means or other, received intelligence of the governor's design against him, baffled all his intentions, and rendered them totally ineffectual. He arose about midnight, and going to the gates of the city took not only them, but likewise the posts || and bars that fastened them upon his shoulders, the whole of which he carried to the top of a hill, and there left them.

Soon after this a circumstance happened, which, in the end, proved fatal to Samson. He

unfortunately

† This rock was so formed by nature as to be accessible only by one path, and that so narrow as not to admit two people to walk abreast; by which it was, perhaps, one of the most defensible places that could be met with.

§ It may appear strange to some that a single person, with no other instrument than the jaw-bone of an ass, should be able to lay so many people dead at his feet; but all wonder will cease when we properly attend to the words of the text, that, at the time, *the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him.* The Philistines, no doubt, were astonished to see the cords fall so suddenly from his hands, and he advancing, with the greatest fury, against them; but the whole must be ascribed to the power of God, who can increase our strength, in all respects, to what degree he pleases, and at the same time enfeeble the spirits of those who oppose his designs in such a manner that they shall not have power to help themselves.

From this singular achievement the place was afterwards called Ramath-Lehi, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies, *the lifting up of the jaw-bone.*

In consequence of this victory Samson composed a triumphant song, of which the two following lines appear to have been the chorus:

With the jaw-bone of an ass have I dispersed them;
With the jaw-bone of an ass have I slew a thousand men.

|| He did not stay to break open the gates, but plucked the posts out of the ground, with the doors hanging upon them fast barred; which extraordinary action so astonished the guards, that they had not power to follow him.

* The words in the text are, *he carried them up to the top of a hill that is before Hebron*, Judges xvi. 3. But the word which we translate *before*, equally signifies, *in the sight of Hebron*; and, therefore, since the distance between Gaza and Hebron is no less than twenty miles, it is most probable, that the hill where Samson left the gates lay between the two cities, and in view of both, that the inhabitants of one might behold them to their confusion, and of the other to their satisfaction, in hopes of a future deliverance.

unfortunately fell in love with a beautiful woman, named Delilah, who lived in the Vale of Sorek †, which lay in those territories belonging to the tribe of Judah; and so captivated was he with the personal charms of this woman, that he sacrificed himself entirely to her will, totally forgetting every precaution necessary for his own safety.

The principal leaders of the Philistines having observed for some time, Samson's ungovernable passion for this woman, determined to take advantage of it, and, if possible, procure his destruction. To effect this they took the opportunity of getting an interview with the woman, whom they promised, that if she would learn of Samson, and discover to them, what was the cause of his wonderful strength, and in what manner he might be deprived of it, they would reward her with a considerable sum of money.

The treacherous Delilah undertook the task, and used all the art she was mistress of to obtain from Samson the important secret. Unwilling to discover it, he amused her with fictions, making her believe that his strength consisted sometimes in one thing, and sometimes in another: first, that binding him with bands made with green withs, or twigs; then, by tying him with seven ropes never before used; and again, weaving his hair into tresses, and filleting them up, would bereave him of his strength.

Delilah tried all these maxims, but finding them of no effect, she upbraided Samson with being false, telling him, his apparent affection for her was all deceit, otherwise he would not hesitate to tell her a matter she was so anxiously desirous to know.

At length, by daily importunities, did the treacherous Delilah prevail on Samson to divulge the important secret:

He cou'd no more, his stubborn heart gave way;

Doubly betray'd, he does himself betray:

Like easy man the fatal secret tells,

Which, like base woman, Delilah reveals.

He told her that all his strength and security depended on the preservation of his hair. *There hath not, said he, come a razor upon mine head: for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven (or have my hair cut off) then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak and like another man ‡.*

From the manner in which Samson told this,

† The Valley of Sorek (through which passed the river of the same name, and where, in the times of Eusebius and St. Jerome, stood the village of Cepharsorek) was situated to the north of Eleutheropolis, near Zorah, the place of Samson's birth. This place, famous for its vines, was about a mile and an half from Eshcol, whence the spies brought their bunch of grapes, as a sample of the fruitfulness of the country. Here it was that Samson had the misfortune to become acquainted with Delilah. It is doubted whether she was a Jewess or a Philistine, a courtesan, or a woman of reputation. St. Chrysostom and some others assert, that Samson married her; but it seems much more probable that she was only his concubine. Samson unhappily abandoned himself intirely to her, and her method of proceeding seems to prove, not only that she was a Philistine, but a woman of a very despicable character.

‡ Josephus paraphrases these words of Samson to Delilah

Delilah believed he spoke truth, and sending word to the chief of the Philistines, that she had got the secret from him, they came and paid the money they had covenanted to give her. Soon after this, Samson, being weary, fell fast asleep with his head in Delilah's lap; upon which she took this opportunity of trying the truth of his assertion. She caused a person, whom she thought most proper for the purpose, to take off his hair while he was asleep, which he did with such ease and dexterity as not to give the least disturbance to the unsuspecting and sacrificed Samson. As soon as he awoke, and began to move, he discovered that he had lost his strength §, and putting his hand to his head was not insensible of the cause. When Delilah found that he was no more than another man, she delivered him into the hands of the Philistines, who, after putting out his eyes, conducted him to Gaza, put him into prison, and obliged him to grind in a mill like a common slave ||.

Samson had not been long in prison before his hair grew again, and with it returned his strength. In the mean time the Philistines (not knowing this) had appointed a certain day on which the princes, nobility and heads of the people, were to assemble, to return thanks to their idol Dagon, for having delivered Samson (whom they considered as their worst enemy) into their hands.

The assembly being met, and this part of the ceremony performed, the whole company retired to participate of a regale which had been provided on the occasion. The feast was held in a very elegant and spacious building, the roof of which was principally supported by two handsome pillars. In the height of their merriment it was proposed that Samson should be sent for out of prison, that they might divert themselves at the expence of his misfortune. This proposition being universally approved of, Samson was accordingly brought into the place, and for some time made the sport of the whole company. This severe and cruel treatment vexed Samson to the heart, and knowing that he was not now deficient of his strength, he resolved to return it on his persecutors. He complained of being greatly fatigued with standing so long, and begged of the boy who led him to the place, to let him lean against the pillars to rest himself. *Suffer me (said he to the lad) that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.* The lad complied with Samson's request, upon which, finding himself between the two pillars, he earnestly prayed to God to give him strength

thus: "I am under the care of God: Born by his immediate Providence. I nourish my hair; for he forbade that I should ever have it cut off, and it is therein that all my strength consists."

§ It is no wonder that God should forsake a man who had forsaken Him to plunge into the excess of a criminal passion. Samson's extraordinary strength was not inherent in himself, but depended entirely on the Divine power coming upon him when there was need of it, so long as he paid a proper attention to those things which belonged to the vow of a Nazarite.

|| Before the invention of wind or water mills, the corn was ground in hand-mills; and it is probable that in this prison where Samson was confined, there was a public mill for the purpose, at which malefactors and slaves were kept constantly employed.

strength to be revenged on his enemies: O Lord God (said he) remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me only this once, that I may be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

The Almighty was pleased to listen to his request, and to give him such a degree of strength as to enable him to accomplish the ends desired. Grasping the two pillars, one with each arm, he said, *Let me die with the Philistines*; after which he exerted himself to such a degree, that, forcing the pillars from their bases, the whole building fell to the ground*. Samson had more company with him at this time than at any other during the course of his life, for, besides the princes and nobility of the Philistines, there were no less than 3000 men and women in the roof, the whole of whom, together with Samson, were crushed to death.

Such was the end of Samson, after having held the government of Israel twenty years. He was a man not only remarkable for his great strength, but his distinguished magnanimity, and pursued, to the last moment of his life, his revenge on the enemies of his country, slaying more of them at his death than he had ever done during the course of his life.

When his relations heard of what had passed, they came to Gaza in search of his body, which, having found, they took away with them, and interred it in the sepulchre of his ancestors†.

If we reflect on the very singular character of Samson, we cannot do otherwise than consider him in the light of a very extraordinary person, immediately raised up by God for the chastisement of the Philistines. In this view, his death was heroic, as he voluntarily sacrificed himself to the service of his country, by the destruction of those who had, in a base manner, insulted him and his God, and who, holding the Israelites in bondage, vainly imagined their idol Dagon superior to the eternal Jehovah.

Samson was, unquestionably, a very singular type of the Messiah. He was called and sanctified in and from the womb; and set apart to deliver his people out of the hands of their enemies. He performed all by his own personal strength alone, without assistance, and almost without weapons; and, in his death, eminently did more than in his life, thereby destroying the power of the Devil, and triumphing over all his enemies.

CHAP VI.

Eli, the high-priest, succeeds to the government of the Israelites. Birth and parentage of the prophet Samuel. Wickedness of Eli's sons. A prophet chastises Eli for his great remissness in the government of the people, and threatens him and his family with destruction. The prophet Samuel is sent to him to confirm the message. The Israelites engage the Philistines, are defeated, the Ark of the Covenant taken, and Eli's two sons slain. Eli, on hearing this news, falls down, and breaks his neck. The Philistines convey the Ark into the house of their idol Dagon, who falls down before it. On this account the Ark is removed to different places, and at length comes again into the possession of the Israelites. By Samuel's means the Israelites solemnly repent at Mizpeh, and afterwards conquer the Philistines. Samuel, being grown old, makes his sons Judges. They act with great indiscretion, on which account the Israelites intreat Samuel to chuse them a king. He listens to their request, but informs them what will be the consequences of their having such a leader.

ACCORDING to the Sacred Writings the government of the Israelites, after the death of Samson, fell into the hands of Eli, the High-priest, in whom it continued some years, though not with that credit to him which his predecessors had justly merited.

The first material circumstance that occurred

after Eli became governor of the people was, the birth of the prophet Samuel, the particulars attending which were as follow:

In the city of Ramah, belonging to the tribe of Ephraim, lived a man named Elkanah, who, as the custom then was, had two wives, the one named Hannah, and the other Peninnah. By the

* The building in which this transaction happened was formed in the shape of an amphitheatre, and solely adapted for the purpose of festivity on particular occasions. It may appear strange to some that the strength of a man should be able to shake so great a fabric; but their wonder will cease when they consider the nature of its construction, the most clear description of which is thus given by that great architect Sir Christopher Wren. "In considering (says he) what this fabric must be, that could at one pull be demolished, I conceive it was an oval amphitheatre, the scene in the middle, where a vast roof of cedar-beams, resting round upon the walls, centered all upon one short architrave, that united two cedar pillars in the middle; one pillar would not be sufficient to unite the ends of at least one hundred beams that tended to the centre; therefore, I say, there must be a short architrave resting upon two pillars, upon which all the beams tending to the centre of the amphitheatre might be supported. Now if Samson,

"by his miraculous strength pressing upon these pillars, moved them from their bases, the whole roof must of necessity fall." The supposition, therefore, that the ends of the beams were united in a circle in the middle will remove any difficulty that may arise from considering that no less than 3000 persons were spectators of Samson's ill treatment from the roof; for this manner of construction must naturally afford a sufficient convenience for the purpose.

Pliny mentions two theatres built at Rome by Caius Curio, which were large enough to contain the whole Roman people, and yet of so singular a construction, as to depend on a single hinge or pivot. And in Tacitus we read of great destruction being made by the fall of a theatre similar to this occasioned by Samson.

† The Philistines were so terrified and humbled at the closing scene of Samson's strength and courage, that when his brethren came to take away his body, they did not offer them the least molestation.

the latter of these he had children, but by Hannah he had not any, notwithstanding they had been together for some years.

Elkanah (as he was accustomed to do once a year) went up to Shiloh to worship and sacrifice to the Lord; and being a pious and religious man, he took with him his two wives, that they, in like manner, might make their oblations. After having made his offerings, he gave a present to each of his wives, but Hannah's portion (who, notwithstanding her sterility, was his greatest favourite) was double to that he bestowed on Peninnah.

This was highly resented by Peninnah, who, priding herself on her children, reproached Hannah for her barrenness. The latter took this treatment so to heart that she cried and wept bitterly, which being observed by Elkanah, he did all in his power to comfort her and remove her grief. But Hannah sought for comfort from a more powerful hand. She repaired to the tabernacle (at the door of which sat Eli the high-priest) and there, falling on her knees, prayed, in the most earnest manner, that God would be pleased to remove her affliction by blessing her with a son, vowing, that if her request was granted she would dedicate him to the Lord all the days of his life, and that *no razor should come upon his head*.

Eli, the priest, seeing Hannah's lips move, but not hearing her speak, imagined that she was intoxicated with wine, and therefore rebuked her: "*How long, said he, wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.*" To which Hannah replied, *No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drank neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.*

When Eli, found himself mistaken, he turned his reproof into a blessing: *Go (said he to her) in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.*

Hannah was so comforted with the blessing bestowed on her by Eli, and his prayers for the success of her request, that she returned with cheerfulness to her husband, who expressed his satisfaction at so sudden but agreeable a change, though quite a stranger to the cause of it. Early the next morning, after performing their religious services, they all departed, and returned to their habitation at Ramah.

It was not long after this before Hannah was made sensible that God had been pleased to listen to her request, and to grant her petition. She

found (to the great satisfaction both of herself and husband) that she had conceived; and accordingly, in the proper course of time, being delivered of a boy, she named him Samuel, which signifies, *asked of God*.

When the child was grown to a proper age to be weaned, Hannah, accompanied by her husband and family, went with him, according to her promise, to the tabernacle of the Lord at Shiloh; on which occasion they took with them an offering, consisting of three bullocks, an ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine.

On their arrival at Shiloh, Hannah, taking the child with her, went to Eli, the priest, and told him, that she was the woman who, some time before, had prayed to God for a child; and that the Almighty having been pleased to grant her request, she came to perform her vow, which was, to dedicate him to the service of the Lord. She then presented the child to Eli, who received it with the most distinguished joy, and returned thanks to God for having been pleased to listen to Hannah's petition. The pious Hannah likewise made her acknowledgments to God for this singular favour in a thanksgiving hymn she had composed on the occasion, and which she sang in the presence of Eli, and the other priests, who attended at the tabernacle †.

Hannah having performed her vow, prepared herself to return with her husband to Ramah; upon which Eli pronounced on them this blessing: *The Lord, said he, (addressing himself to Elkanah) give thee seed of this woman, for the loan which is lent to the Lord.* He then, in the presence of Hannah and her husband, clothed their child Samuel with a proper habit, even with a linen ephod, that he might attend on the service of the tabernacle.

After this Elkanah and Hannah took their leave of Eli, and departed for Ramah; and the blessing which Eli had given them was not in vain, for, in the course of time, they had five other children, namely, three sons and two daughters.

Samuel, being thus placed in the hands of Eli, he took all the care of him that was possible, and as the child grew up, such were the merits of his natural disposition, that he not only grew in favour with God, but was likewise beloved by his fellow-creatures.

These circumstances gave the most satisfactory pleasure to Eli, but his happiness was greatly disturbed by the misconduct of the heads of his family. He was, of himself, a very good kind of man, both as priest and judge, but, unfortunately, he was, by far, too indulgent to his children.

† The hymn which Hannah composed and sang on this occasion is contained in the ten first verses of the second chapter of the first Book of Samuel; and may be thus paraphrased:

In God, my Saviour, O my soul, rejoice!
Awake my vocal lyre! my tuneful voice!
Thee, Holy! Holy! Holy! Thee alone,
Officious angels serve around thy throne.

Insult no more ye hard of heart and proud!
Restrain your tongues, nor talk so fierce and loud!
For God's impartial eye the world surveys,
With equal justice every action weighs.

The mighty bows, which mighty arms did wield,
Unstrung and broke, are scatter'd round the field.
O God of strength, by Thee the weak are rais'd,
The angry fill'd, the rich and proud debas'd:
The barren womb a num'rous offspring fills,
'Tis he that makes alive, 'tis he that kills:
'Tis he alone, or poor or rich to make,
He from the dunghill does the Lazar take,
To gloomy shades th' unjust shall be confin'd,
His foes shall God's fierce wrath to pieces grind:
While from his angry throne th' unerring darts,
With vengeance wing'd, shall pierce their faithless hearts,
O'er all the world shall he extend his sway,
And all the world his sacred laws obey.

dren. He had two sons, the one named Hophni, and the other Phinehas, both of whom were mere libertines. They domineered over the men, and violated the women who came to their devotions; and so far were they from being content with the portion allotted them as priests, that they forced from the people (even before they had made their oblations) what part of the sacrifice they pleased. These horrid proceedings, from those who ought to have set virtuous examples, occasioned a general dissipation among the people, who thought themselves authorized in their misconduct from the precedent set them by their superiors; so that religion grew into contempt, and the worship of God was almost totally disused.

Eli was not insensible of the ill conduct and depravity of his sons; but, instead of chastising them as his authority required, he only reproved them at times, and that in such gentle and mild terms, as rather encouraged, than deterred them from proceeding in their wicked practices.

At length, the Almighty, being provoked at the remissness of his servant Eli, sent a prophet to him to threaten him and his family with destruction; to upbraid him with his ingratitude in slighting the sacerdotal honour which he had been pleased to confer on him; to foretel the death of his two wicked sons in one day, and the removal of his priesthood into another and better family. And to shew Eli the wretched poverty that his posterity should fall into, he farther told him, That every one who should be left in his house should come and crouch to a more faithful priest (whom the Lord would set up) for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread; and should say, *Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.*

A short time after this the Almighty was pleased to give Eli an awful denunciation of his judgment by a much younger hand. This was no other than the young Samuel, whom God had been pleased not only to take under his immediate protection, but likewise to endue him with the gift of prophecy. He lodged in the farther part of the tabernacle among the Levites; and one night, while he was in bed he heard a voice calling him by his name, upon which, as the manner then was, he answered, *Here am I.* Supposing the voice to be that of Eli's, Samuel immediately arose, went to his apartment, and asked his pleasure. Eli, surprized at this, told Samuel he must certainly be mistaken, for that he had not even mentioned his name since he was left with him. On this Samuel retired, and went again to rest, but he was soon interrupted by the same voice, who, three several times, distinctly called him by his name. In consequence of this he again arose, went to Eli, told him what had passed, and that was he assured the voice must have been his.

Eli began now to think that there was something more than common in this circumstance, more particularly as he was conscious to himself that he had not even mentioned Samuel's name. He was convinced, in his mind, that it must have been the voice of God, and therefore told Samuel to go again to rest, and if he should hear a repetition of the voice, to make this reply, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant beareth.*

Samuel did as Eli had directed, and on again hearing the voice, gave the necessary reply; upon which God was pleased to acquaint him with the punishment to be inflicted on Eli and his family, the former for his remissness in the government of the people, and the latter for their unparalleled wickedness. The sentence given by the Almighty at this time, and on this occasion, was expressed in words to the following effect: "All that I have spoken concerning Eli and his house I will perform; for I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity to which he has been privy. Because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. Therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice, nor offerings for ever."

This sentence was so terrible, even to Samuel, though he had no share in it, that, for some time, he was unwilling to acquaint Eli with what had passed. But Eli, alarmed at what had before happened, and imagining that something extraordinary would follow, insisted on knowing. At length Samuel complied, and gave him a particular account of all that had been revealed to him, which Eli received with a mind fully resigned to the Divine will. *It is the Lord,* said he, *let him do what seemeth him good.*

A short time after this God was pleased to appear again at Shiloh, and there reveal himself to his servant Samuel. As he advanced in years, so he increased in grace, and whatsoever Samuel told the people, the Almighty was pleased to cause it to be accomplished; so that in a short time *all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.*

There had been but few prophets for a great course of years, and revelations were very scarce; so that when the Israelites found that God had appointed Samuel to the prophetic office, they were greatly rejoiced, concluding that whatever they should undertake in future would be attended with success.

Animated with these reflections, the Israelites resolved to take up arms, and, if possible, to rescue themselves out of the hands of the Philistines. For this purpose, without consulting either God or their priests, they marched their army from Shiloh, and encamped at a place afterwards called Eben-ezer. The Philistines, having been informed of the motion of the Israelites, led out their army against them, and encamped at Aphek, a city of Judah. The next day the two armies met, when a desperate battle ensued, which proved fatal to the Israelites, no less than 4000 being slain on the spot, and the rest put to flight.

This defeat greatly alarmed the Israelites, some of whom imputed it to arise from their want of the Ark in the army, which, as the symbol of God's presence, they said would be a sure means of success. Accordingly, proper messengers were dispatched to Hophni and Phinehas, with orders for them immediately to bring the ark; which no sooner arrived in the camp than the people testified their joy by the loudest acclamations.

When the Philistines first heard that the Ark was brought into the camp of the Israelites they

were greatly dispirited; but at length, taking courage, and exhorting each other to perseverance, they prepared themselves to oppose the enemy.

The Israelites, too confident of success, attacked the Philistines with great fury; but they were soon repulsed, with the loss of 30,000 men, among whom were Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli. The rest of the army were glad to save themselves by flight; so that the Ark of the Lord fell into the hands of the Philistines.

The melancholy news of this defeat was carried to Shiloh, on the very same day it happened, by a soldier belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, who had made his escape from the field of battle. As soon as it was known, an universal outcry and lamentation prevailed throughout the city; and when Eli came to understand what was the cause of it, he sent for the man to know the particulars. The soldier told him, the Israelites were routed, his two sons slain, and the ark of the Lord taken by the enemy.

Eli heard of the defeat of the army, and the death of his sons, without appearing in the least agitated; but, when he was told the Ark of the Lord had fallen into the enemy's hands, his spirits forsook him, he fell from his chair, and breaking his neck, instantly expired. Thus died Eli the high-priest, in the 98th year of his age and 40th of his government.

When the wife of Phinehas (who was at this time with child and near her time) heard of the deaths of her husband and father, and (what was worst of all) of the captivity of the ark, she immediately fell in labour, and being delivered of a son, had just strength enough to name him Ichabod, (which signifies *no glory*) before she expired; because the ark, which was the glory of Israel (as she assigned the reason) was departed from them.

After the Philistines had defeated the Israelites, and made themselves masters of the Ark, they carried it in great triumph to one of their principal cities called Ashdod, and there placed it in the temple of their idol Dagon, near his image. The next morning, when the people went to the temple to pay their devotions, they found Dagon § fallen down upon his face before the Ark; but supposing it to be an accident, they set him up again. When they went the following morning to the temple, they found him not only on the ground, but in an imper-

fect state, his head and hands being broken off, and lying on the threshold. This circumstance gave rise to a superstitious maxim ever afterwards observed by the Philistines, which was, that neither priest or people would, on any account whatever, set their feet on a threshold.

As soon as it was known throughout the city of Ashdod the fate that had befallen their idol Dagon, the people were greatly alarmed, and began to think he was far inferior to the God of Israel. Nor was it long before they found their conjectures right; for the Almighty was pleased to lay his heavy judgments not only on Ashdod, but likewise all the adjoining places, by afflicting the people with emerods ||, and overrunning the country with mice, which, destroying all the fruits of the earth, divested them of the common necessities of life.

The inhabitants of Ashdod were now sensible that the calamities under which they laboured were inflicted on them by the God of Israel, as a punishment for having taken and detained the Ark of the Lord. They therefore laid their complaints before the chief men of the city, who, after some time consulting together, at length determined that the Ark should be sent to the city of Gath. This was accordingly done, when the same calamities with which the people of Ashdod had been afflicted, likewise fell on those of Gath. In consequence of this the Ark was removed to Ekron, the inhabitants of which no sooner saw it than they cried out, *They have brought about the Ark of the God of Israel to slay us and our people.* The people of this place were no less afflicted (while the Ark remained with them) than the Ashdodites and Gathites, for, besides having the plague of the emerods, they had a dreadful pestilence, which proved fatal to great numbers of the inhabitants.

After the Ark of the Lord had been in the hands of the Philistines seven months (during which time they laboured under the calamities inflicted on them by the God of Israel for detaining it) they applied to their priests, requesting their advice whether they should any longer keep it, or deliver it up to the Israelites. The advice given by the priests was, that it should be sent away, but not empty: that they should prepare a trespass offering for the atonement of their sacrilege, which should consist of five golden emerods, and five golden mice *, according to the number of the princes of the Philistines: and

§ The idol Dagon, worshipped by the Philistines, was represented as a monster, having the appearance of a man upwards, and a fish downwards; whence the learned derive his name from the Hebrew word *Dag*, which signifies a *fish*. Milton, after enumerating this deity among the fallen angels, thus describes him:

Next came one
Who mourn'd in earnest, when the captive ark
Maim'd his brute image, head and hands lopp'd off,
In his own temple, on the groundsel edge,
Where he fell flat, and sham'd his worshippers:
Dagon his name; sea-monster! upward man,
And downward fish; yet had his temple high,
Rear'd in Ashdod, dreaded through the coast
Of Palestine, in Gath, and Ascalon,
And Ascaron, and Gaza's frontier bounds.

|| The word *emerod* (which throughout the whole Scriptures only occurs here, and in the xlviii. chapter of Deu-

teronomy) is by different interpreters, supposed to signify different things. Some take it to be the disease called the *dysentery*, others a *cancer*, and some the *piles*, otherwise called *Providentia Ani*, which, swelling to a prodigious size, and being violently inflamed, frequently produced the most inveterate ulcers. This last seems to be the most reasonable conjecture, and the authority we have for it is from the Scripture, which expressly tells us, that *God smote his enemies in the hinder parts.* See Psal. lxxviii. 66.

* "It was an ancient custom (says Mr. Locke) in case a city or country was infected with any plague of diseases, or noxious creatures, to consult the talisman, who ordered an image to be erected of the plague, under a certain influence of celestial configuration; and this was the cause why the Philistine priests gave counsel that golden images should be made to represent the disease with which he had been afflicted, as also of those vermin which had destroyed the fruits of the earth." Tavernier tells us, that something similar to this is still practised among the Indians; for when a pilgrim there goes to a pagod for the cure of any disease, he brings the figure

and that, by thus acknowledging the glory of the God of Israel, they might hope that he would rid them of the plagues with which they had been so long afflicted.

This advice being unanimously approved of by the people, the priests proceeded to give them the necessary directions for the removal of the Ark. They told them that the golden mice, and the images of the emeralds, should be put into a coffer or box by themselves, and being placed by the side of the Ark, the whole should be put into a cart made for the purpose, to be drawn by two milch cows, that had never been yoked before, and their calves to be closely confined. That the cart, with the Ark, should be conducted to a certain spot, when the kine should be left to themselves, and that they should take particular notice which way they went. If they took the Hebrew road and went on, they might impute their calamities to the Ark; but, if they took another course, they might consider them only as common accidents †.

All things being prepared, according to the directions given by the priests, the kine were led to the spot fixed on, attended only by the princes of the respective cities belonging to the Philistines, namely, Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron. The kine were no sooner left to themselves than they immediately took the Hebrew road, and went lowing along till they came near Bethshemeth (one of the cities belonging to the Levites) where they made a full stop by a great stone, called the *Stone of Abel*.

As soon as the Ark was seen, and the news of its arrival spread about, the people flocked to it in great multitudes, and, expressed their joy with the loudest acclamations. The Levites, after carefully taking out the Ark, together with the box that contained the trespass-offering, burnt the cart that brought them, and sacrificed the two kine as an offering to God; after which ceremony the princes of the Philistines (who had followed the Ark to this place) left it, and returned to Ekron.

Some of the Bethlemites (either from the extravagance of their joy, or out of curiosity,) venturing to look into the Ark (which was expressly against the Divine command) found the fatal effects of their unthinking presumption,

no less (according to the sacred historian) than 50,070 being suddenly struck dead †.

Alarmed at this distinguished instance of the Divine displeasure, the Bethlemites were fearful of having the Ark any longer in their possession, crying out, *Who is able to stand before the Holy Lord God? and to whom shall he go up from us?* They therefore sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, acquainting them that the Philistines had brought back the Ark, and desiring them to come and fetch it, as they were not worthy to have it in their possession. The people of Kirjath-jearim accordingly came, and taking with them the Ark, it was placed in the house of one Abinadab, a Levite, a man distinguished for his integrity and great piety; in whose charge, assisted by his son Eleazar, whom he consecrated on the occasion, it remained for the space of twenty years.

After the death of Eli, and the loss of the Ark, the young prophet Samuel took upon himself the management of the idolatrous Israelites. He summoned together the whole body of the people, whom, in a speech §, which could arise only from a person Divinely inspired, he exhorted them to put away the strange gods Baal, and Ashtaroath, and only serve the Lord; assuring them, that, if they followed his advice, they should be delivered out of the hands of the Philistines.

This speech had such an effect on the Israelites, that they promised to pay a strict attention to all that Samuel had said, and that they would inviolably obey the Divine commands.

A short time after this Samuel summoned an assembly of the people at Mizpeh, where they held a solemn fast, and made their most serious humiliations to the Lord. They wept and prayed, confessed their sins, and made libations; after which, Samuel again addressed himself to them in a speech, advising them to prosecute the reformation they had thus begun, for on that alone depended their future prosperity.

When the Philistines understood that the Israelites were assembled at Mizpeh, they marched with a considerable army towards the place, with an intent of attacking them by surprise. As soon as the Israelites saw them they were struck with terror, and, in their fright, told Samuel

figure of the member affected, made either of gold, silver, or copper, according to his quality, which he offers to the idol, and then sings and dances for joy in expectation of his malady being removed. It was also a custom among the ancient heathens to consecrate to their idols the monuments of their deliverances.

† A celebrated writer, in speaking of this circumstance, says, "It was no bad policy in the Philistines to take milch kine that had never been yoked before, to draw the cart, in order to know whether or not there was the hand of God in what had befallen them. As those creatures were unacquainted with the yoke, it would be a wonder if they should go together, and not thwart, or draw counter to each other: it would be a wonder if their natural affection would not incline them to return to their calves which were left behind: and it would still be a greater wonder, if, when there were so many different ways to take, they should go directly forwards towards Judea, without any manner of deviation. It was therefore a matter of no small sagacity for the Philistines to make this experiment: to say nothing that it was a received opinion among the heathens that, in the motions of an heifer, or cow that was never yoked, there was something ominous, and declarative of the Divine will."

† It is the opinion of most commentators that the number slain on this occasion was only seventy, and that the 50,000 refers to the number of the whole body of the Bethlemites. This opinion is corroborated by the ancient historian Josephus, who positively makes the number only *seventy*.

§ The speech Josephus puts into the mouth of Samuel, on this occasion, is to the following effect: "O ye men of Israel (said he) ye have fatally experienced the implacable hatred and malice of your enemies; nor have ye reason to expect being delivered out of their hands without a sincere repentance. Let me, therefore, recommend it to you, to inure yourselves to the love and practice of justice: purge your minds of all improper affections: turn to God, adore him, and honour him in your lives and conversation, as well as with your lips. If you do good things, good will come of it; that is to say, you will be possessed of conquest and liberty. But these are blessings not to be obtained by force of men, strength of body, or bands of soldiers. It is God alone who can bestow those privileges, which he has promised to do if you adhere strictly to his ordinances; and you may depend upon it, in that case, you will not be disappointed."

muel there was no possibility of escaping the fury of so inveterate an enemy, unless he could prevail with God to grant them his Divine assistance. Samuel, after bidding them not to fear, sacrificed a sucking lamb to God, in the name of the people, and at the same time implored his aid against the power of the Philistines. The Almighty was pleased not only to accept the sacrifice, but likewise to promise Samuel that the Israelites should obtain a complete victory over their enemies.

While the sacrifice was yet on the altar the army of the Philistines drew themselves out in order of battle; but they had no sooner begun the attack than there issued from the heavens the most dreadful peals of thunder, and flashes of lightning, ever remembered.* This so terrified the Philistines, that they were totally unable to use their arms, and therefore hastily betook themselves to flight. The Israelites seeing this, immediately pursued them as far as Bethel (killing great numbers in the way) where Samuel set up a stone in memory of the victory. He called it Ebenezer, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *the help of God*.

This defeat struck such a panic into the Philistines, that they did not presume to make any farther attempt on the Israelites. On the contrary, Samuel, with his army, pursued them from one city to another, and at length retook the whole country that lies betwixt Gath and Ekron, which had formerly belonged to the Israelites, but was taken from them by the Philistines.

After Samuel had thus reduced the Philistines, and re-instated the people in the possession of their lands and cities, he took up his residence at Ramah, where he built an altar to the Lord, and employed his time in administering justice to the people. He appointed public meetings to be held, at certain times, in different parts of the country, for this purpose; and took a circuit twice every year to see that it was properly executed, making it his principal care to prevent any violation of the laws of his country.

In the course of time, Samuel, being advanced in years, and unable, from natural infirmities, to discharge the duties of his office, relinquished the government of the people, and placed it in the hands of his two sons, Joel and Abiah, whom

he ordered to follow his example, by going from Beer-sheba (the place of their residence) to different parts of the country, in order to see that justice universally took place among the people intrusted to their care.

The two sons of Samuel acted diametrically opposite to the maxims of their father, and to the injunctions he had laid on them for the government of the people. They prostituted justice for gain, and decided controversies by the value of the bribe. They gave themselves up to every kind of vice, and seemed to bid defiance not only to the injunctions of their father, but likewise the commands of their Maker.†

In consequence of this the elders of the people went to Samuel at Ramah, and after representing the grievances they lay under, from his infirmities, and the mal-administration of his sons, desired to have the form of their government changed, and that a king might be appointed over them as in other nations.

This request gave great uneasiness to Samuel, and, for some time, he knew not how to act. At length he applied himself to God, who was pleased to tell him to comply with the desire of the people, notwithstanding the indignity offered by them was not so much on Samuel as on himself. But, before they proceeded to the choice of a king, he ordered Samuel to acquaint them with what his prerogatives were, and what they might expect he would demand from them; and withal, to inform them, that slavery to them and their children, subjection to the meanest offices, loss of liberty, heavy taxes, constant war, and many other inconveniencies, would be the consequences of a kingly power.

Samuel, having received this intelligence from God, assembled the people together, and displayed to them the consequences that would follow should they persist in their obstinacy. But all his remonstrances were of no effect: the people were absolute in their demand, saying, "We will have a king over us, that we may be like other nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles." Upon this Samuel broke up the assembly, telling the people he would again call them together as soon as he should receive directions from God who should be their king.

* The account Josephus gives of this transaction is as follows: "In some places, says he, God shook the foundations of the earth under the feet of the Philistines, so that they could not stand without staggering: In others, it opened and swallowed them up alive, before they knew where they were; while the claps of thunder and flashes of lightning were so violent, that their very eyes and limbs were scorched to such a degree, that they could neither see their way before them, nor handle their arms."

† It may possibly be asked why Samuel was not punished, in the same manner as Eli, for the wickedness of his sons? But to this it may be answered, that Samuel's sons were not so bad as those of Eli; since taking bribes privately was not like openly profaning the Tabernacle, and making the worship of God contemptible. And, besides this, it is possible that Samuel might be ignorant of the corruption of his sons, since he lived at Ramah, and they dwelt at Beer-sheba.

C H A P. VII.

Samuel, by the command of God, anoints Saul king of Israel. He is chosen king by the people at Mizpeh. Heads an army against the Ammonites, and defeats them. His election to the kingly office is confirmed at Gilgal. Samuel makes a speech to the people on resigning up the government, in which he reproves them for their ingratitude, and exhorts them to future obedience. Saul assembles the people together at Gilgal, in order to march against the Philistines. Is reproved by Samuel for sacrificing in his absence. He engages the Philistines, and obtains a complete victory. Is ordered totally to destroy the Amalekites, but instead thereof saves Agag their king, together with the best of their cattle. For this disobedience Saul is severely reproved by Samuel, who, with his own hands, puts Agag to death. David is anointed king instead of Saul, who, growing melancholy, sends for David to divert him by playing on the harp. He retains him in his house, and makes him one of his armour-bearers. David kills the champion Goliath. Saul grows jealous of David, and, by various means, seeks his life. David contracts a friendship with Jonathan, one of Saul's sons, by whose assistance he escapes the different plots laid by Saul for his destruction. Saul orders a number of priests to be put to death. He pursues David into several places, but is still disappointed. Death of the prophet Samuel.

NEVER was the interposition of Providence manifested in a greater degree than in the appointment of Saul as king over the Israelites; the circumstances attending which cannot be read without the most distinguished admiration.

From small events what mighty things proceed !

Our fates, tho' not our crimes, by Heav'n's decreed.

To reach and foresight vainly we pretend,
How unproportion'd oft the rise and end !

Saul was the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin. He was tall in stature, robust, handsome in his features, and naturally courageous. It happened at this time that some of his father's asses† had gone a stray, and he and a servant were sent to look for them. They wandered, without receiving any intelligence of the asses, till they came to a territory called Zuph, in which was the city of Ramah, the place of Samuel's residence. When they came near Ramah, the servant told Saul that in that city dwelt a prophet, and if they went to him he would direct them the right way they should go. Saul made some objection to this proposal, on account of his not having a proper present to make the prophet; but the servant removed this difficulty, by telling him he had the fourth part of a shekel of silver, which he would give to him as a reward for directing them the way they should take to find their asses.

In consequence of this Saul agreed, and they prosecuted their journey towards Ramah. On ascending the hill which led into the city they met several women going to a well to fetch water. They asked them if the prophet was there,

to which they replied in the affirmative; telling them he had that day come into the city, that he was going to attend a public sacrifice, and that if they did not make haste they could not speak with him. Saul and his servant thanked the women for their intelligence, and, leaving them, hastened, with all expedition, to find out the prophet.

Samuel was apprized of the coming of his new visitor, the Almighty having, the preceding day, been pleased to acquaint him that he would see a person whom he should appoint king over the Israelites. *To-morrow, (said he) about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hands of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.*

Saul and his servant having entered the city of Ramah came to the house of Samuel, who happened to be at the door just going to attend on the sacrifice. Saul, not knowing him, asked which was the house of the prophet? To which Samuel replied, he had already found it. He then (knowing him to be the person whom God had appointed to the government) told Saul, that the asses he sought for were safe, and at the same time intimated to him that he was on the point of being advanced to the highest pitch of sovereign power. He then conducted Saul and his servant to the place where he was going to offer up the sacrifice, and after the ceremony was over invited them to partake of the feast held on the occasion. This being accepted, Samuel placed Saul above the rest of his guests (who were thirty in number) and his servant next him, ordering the attendants to supply him with the choicest dishes. During the whole entertain-
ment

† By this it appears that Saul's employment, according to the manners of the present age, was but of a mean nature; but it is to be observed that, in antient times, every thing which pertained to a rural life was deemed honourable. Even heroes and princes kept flocks; and such, indeed, was the

occupation of the patriarchs. The Scripture speaks of a prince descended from Esau, who kept the asses of his father, Gen. xxxvi. 24. Asses were a considerable part of the peoples possessions in Judea, and persons of the first distinction there commonly rode on them. See Judges x. 4.

ment he treated Saul with the most distinguished respect, and, when the company broke up and departed, insisted on his staying with him that night. Saul accepted this invitation, and, in the evening, had a long conference in private with Samuel.

Early the next morning Samuel called up his guests, and accompanied them some way from the city. Having done this he desired Saul to order his servant to go before, as he had something to say to him that demanded privacy †. When the servant had got at a proper distance, Samuel, taking out of his pocket a vial of oil, poured it on the head of Saul, telling him that, by the Lord's appointment, he anointed him king over the people. In token of what he said being true, he foretold several particulars that should happen to him on his return home. That, when he came near Rachel's tomb, he should meet with two men, who would inform him that his father's asses were found: that, departing thence, he would meet three men going to Bethel to worship God, one of them carrying three kids, another three cakes of bread, and the third a bottle of wine; and that they should offer him two of the loaves, which he should accept. Lastly, that when he came to Geba (commonly called the Hill of God) where was a garrison of the Philistines, he should meet a company of prophets going into the city, when the Spirit of God should come upon him §, and he (to the wonder of all who should hear him) should begin to prophesy among them. He then ordered Saul to go to Gilgal, where, in seven days, he might expect to see him, as he intended being there to present a peace-offering to the Lord. Having said this Samuel left Saul, who prosecuted his journey with his servant, in the course of which he found every thing to happen just as Samuel had foretold.

When Saul arrived at his father's house, his uncle desired him to relate the occurrences, that had happened during his absence. In some measure Saul complied with his uncle's request: he told him the particulars of his going to the prophet, and in what manner he came to hear of his asses; but did not mention a syllable of what had passed between him and Samuel, relative to his future dignity.

Thus was Saul appointed King, but then it was only between Samuel and himself. To make, therefore, his choice and inauguration more public, Samuel convened a general assembly of the people at Mizpeh, to which place the Ark of the Lord was brought that they might with more solemnity proceed to the election of

a king. As soon as the people were met, Samuel addressed them in words to this effect: "I am commanded, by God himself, to inform you; that it was He who not only delivered you out of Egyptian bondage, but also repeatedly rescued you from the hands of your enemies. In return for this you have been so ungrateful as to shake off his authority, by insisting on having a king of your own chusing. Since, therefore, you are resolved upon this divide yourselves by your tribes and families, and then cast lots who shall be the man."

The people followed the directions given by Samuel, and the method they took was this: First, the lot was cast for every tribe separately, to know out of which the king was to be chosen; and the lot fell upon that of Benjamin. Next, it was cast for all the families of this tribe, and fell upon that of Matri. And, lastly, it was cast for all the persons of this family, when it fell upon Saul the son of Kish.

Saul, well knowing on whom the lot would fall, had secreted himself, and for some time could not be found. The people were anxious to see the person who was chosen their king, and therefore made the most diligent search after him. At length they found him, and as soon as Saul appeared before the assembly, Samuel thus addressed them: *Behold, said he, him whom the Lord hath chosen! there is none like him among all the people.* The majestic appearance of Saul, together with his amazing stature (being considerably taller than any of the whole assembly) perfectly satisfied the people, who expressed their approbation, by shouting, *God save the King.*

Samuel hereupon (having previously written down every thing that was to happen) related the same to the people before Saul; after which he placed the book in the Ark of the Covenant, there to remain as an evidence for ever of what he had prophesied.

Saul being thus chosen king by the general approbation of the people, Samuel dismissed the assembly, and returned to Ramah; while Saul proceeded to Gibeah, the place of his nativity. He was accompanied by the principal people of the different tribes, who congratulated him on his accession to the throne with the loudest acclamations. Indeed, he had the good wishes of all the people, except some few disorderly persons, who disapproved of the choice, and, in manifest contempt, refused to make him the usual presents ||; which Saul could not but perceive, though, at that time, he did not think proper to notice *.

Saul

† Samuel's design in this was, that Saul might understand the steps he took were by the direction of God, and that when they should come to cast lots among all the tribes (as they afterwards did) Saul might not think he was chosen king by the chance of a lot. There might be likewise this farther reason for Samuel's bidding Saul to send away his servant, viz. lest the people, suspecting Samuel to do this by his own will, more than by God's appointment, might be inclinable to mutiny.

§ The accomplishment of this prediction could not fail of convincing Saul that what the prophet had done was by the immediate appointment of God; and consequently he had the greatest reason to believe, that the same Divine Being who had exalted him to the supreme government of Israel would invest him with the necessary qualifications for the

due execution and discharge of so important a trust: and so, indeed it really was, for we are told, *God gave him another heart.* See 1 Sam. x. 9.

|| It was a general custom among the Eastern nations (as it is, indeed, even to this day) that whenever the people approached the king, they should compliment him with a present. But, in the case of Saul, at his accession to the throne, it was the proper method of recognizing him. The Chaldee paraphrase says, *they did not come to salute him, or wish him an happy reign:* but this is the same thing, because the first salutation offered to a king was always attended with presents, which carried with them the signs of peace and friendship, congratulation and joy, subjection and obedience.

* Saul, in this instance, was exceeding politic, being unwilling to begin his reign with any tumult, which his just resentment

Saul had not been long on the throne before he had an opportunity of displaying his regal authority, and shewing the people what they might expect from his future government. Nahash, king of the Ammonites, at the head of a powerful army, had committed various outrages, in different parts, on the other side the river Jordan, and not only destroyed their cities and towns, but likewise exercised the most cruel barbarities on the wretched captives. At length he laid siege to Jabelh-Gilead, the inhabitants of which were so alarmed that they offered to treat with him, and subject themselves to such conditions as he should direct. But the haughty and cruel tyrant would not listen to any terms of accommodation without this injunction, that every man amongst them should sustain the loss of his right eye †.

So horrid a condition could not be complied with by the Israelites, who returned for answer, that they desired only seven days to send to their friends for relief, and if they did not receive any in that time they would either surrender themselves up, or stand a contest. Nahash looked upon the Israelites in so contemptible a light, and thought himself so secure of reducing them at discretion, that he made no hesitation at granting their request.

In consequence of this the Gileadites dispatched messengers to Gibeah, requesting Saul to send them immediate succour, that they might be enabled to defend themselves against the power of their cruel and inveterate enemies. Saul paid an immediate attention to their request, and having issued a proclamation for the people to assemble, soon got together a very powerful army, consisting of 300,000 men, besides thirty thousand belonging to the tribe of Judah; and with these he promised to relieve the besieged the next day.

The messengers returned with these glad tidings to their distressed brethren, who, elated with the agreeable expectations of being delivered from their enemies, sent them this message. *To-morrow, we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you.*

Saul strictly fulfilled his engagement. Early the next morning he marched with his whole army (which he divided into three companies)

against the Ammonites, and falling suddenly on them, before break of day, threw them into the utmost confusion, by which they were so totally routed and dispersed, that scarce two of them were left together.

This important conquest over so formidable and cruel an enemy greatly enhanced the reputation of Saul, and induced some of his favourites to request, that he would exert his power in the punishment of those who had treated him with indignity at his election. But Saul very prudently opposed this motion, not chusing to fully the glory of so memorable an exploit by the death of any one of those subjects who had then offended him, and for whom, among the rest, the Lord had that day wrought so great *salvation*.

From this victory, however, Samuel took occasion to give those, who had hitherto refused their allegiance, an opportunity of coming in, and recognizing the king. For this purpose he ordered a general assembly of the people of Gilgal to confirm Saul's election; which accordingly was celebrated with great mirth and festivity, as well as with sacrifices and thanksgivings to God, as the Author of all their successes.

Saul being thus fully established on the throne of Israel, it of course followed that Samuel (who had before governed them) should now in a formal manner, relinquish that power, with which he had been hitherto invested. This he accordingly did, and then made a long speech on the occasion, in which he first of all vindicated his conduct during the whole of his administration. He then reminded them of the great transgressions which they and their forefathers had committed; set before them the blessings consequent upon their obedience, and the judgments which would certainly attend their disobedience, to the laws of God. He gave them to understand that they had been far from doing an acceptable thing to God, in rejecting his government, and desiring a king ‡; and (that they might not think he mentioned this out of any prejudice, or acted on his own head) he told them they should behold a manifest token of the Divine displeasure at their conduct: *Stand, said he, and see this great thing which the Lord*

repentment of such an affront might have occasioned. If he had taken any notice of the affront, and not revenged it, the people might have thought him mean-spirited, and if he had repented it, they might possibly have accused him of severity and cruelty.

† As the manner of fighting, in those days, was chiefly with bows and arrows, sword and shield, the loss of the right eye would have disabled them from doing either. It is probable, such was the natural cruelty of his disposition, that he would have demanded the loss of both their eyes had it not been for this political reason, namely, that, in such case, they would have been utterly incapable of rendering him any service, or paying any tribute.

‡ That part of the speech, which Josephus introduces Samuel as making to the people, and complaining of their importunity for a change of government, is conceived in these terms: "What should you chuse another king for, after the experience of so many signal mercies, and miraculous deliverances, while you were under God's protection, and owned him for your governor? You have forgotten the story of your forefather Jacob's coming into

"Egypt with only seventy men in his train, and purely for want of bread; how God provided for them, and, by his blessing, how they increased and multiplied. You have forgotten the slavery and oppression they groaned under, till, upon their cries and supplications for relief, God rescued them himself, without the help of kings, by the hands of Moses and Aaron, who brought them out of Egypt into the land you are now possessed of. How can you then be so ungrateful now, after so many blessings and benefits received, as to depart from the reverence and allegiance, you owe to so powerful and so merciful a protector? How often have you been delivered up into the hands of your enemies for your apostacy and disobedience, and as often afterward restored to God's favour, and your liberty, upon your humiliation and repentance? Who was it but God, that gave you victory first over the Assyrians, then over the Ammonites, then over the Moabites, and, last of all, over the Philistines, not by the influence and direction of kings, but under the conduct of Jephthah and Gideon? What madness has possessed you, then, to abandon an heavenly governor for an earthly one?"

Lord will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat-harvest to-day? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king.

No sooner did Samuel call unto the Lord for the fulfilment of this prediction, than it immediately came to pass, and there fell such a violent storm of thunder, lightning and rain as almost to pronounce a general dissolution of nature. An universal terror took place among the people: they immediately acknowledged their transgressions, and earnestly besought Samuel to plead with God in their behalf. Samuel promised to comply with their request, and farther told them, that so long as they adhered to the observation of God's laws he would assist them with his best instructions; but if they despised his advice, not only themselves, but likewise their king, would be infallibly destroyed. *As for me, said he, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.* Having said this, Samuel dismissed the assembly, and retired.

From this advice given to the people by Samuel, we are taught to know, that the felicity, or downfall of states, depends on a proper attendance to the laws of God both from the prince and people. Those states where virtue and justice flourish and abound will be blessed of God; but where indifference to each prevails, prince and people will, sooner or later, feel his avenging hand. Happy the nation in which there are Samuels, faithful pastors, and good magistrates, who have the most tender affection for those committed to their trust; who never cease to pray for them, and who are never weary of instructing them in the good and right way, which leads to present and eternal felicity!

Some time after Saul had defeated the Ammonites he dismissed all his forces, except three thousand, two of which he retained at Michmash as his own body guard, and the other thousand he appointed to attend on his son Jonathan, who lived at Gibeah.

A short time after this, Jonathan, being a youth of great courage and military prowess, attacked, and cut off, a garrison of Philistines at Geba; in consequence of which they immediately raised a very powerful army, and, marching against the Israelites, encamped near Michmash, a little to the east of Bethaven.

The Hebrew army, which was appointed to rendezvous at Gilgal, came in but very slowly, and many of those that did were struck with such

timidity at the thoughts of engaging the Philistines, that they secreted themselves in rocks and caves; while others, from the mere apprehension of danger, retired beyond the river Jordan. In short, both prince and people were intimidated, and the more so, because Samuel, whose company at this juncture was impatiently expected, was not yet come. He had promised Saul to be with him in the course of seven days, which time being nearly expired Saul, fearful lest the enemy should fall on him before he had made his addresses to God for success, determined not to wait any longer, and therefore gave orders for sacrifices to be made. These orders were immediately obeyed, when, just as the burnt-offering was finished, news was brought of the arrival of Samuel.

When Samuel found what Saul had done, he was highly offended at his diffidence and impatience, and not only sharply rebuked him, but declared likewise that God, if he continued to prosecute the like measures, would, in time, be so provoked as to remove the government of the people from him and his posterity, and place it in the hands of one who better deserved it.

Having given Saul this severe rebuke, Samuel departed, soon after which the king, accompanied by his son Jonathan, marched with his army to Gibeah, and there encamped. His troops were very small in number, being only about six hundred, and these so badly provided for action, that there were neither sword or spear among them; and the chief weapons they had to defend themselves were the different instruments used in their respective employments, such as plough-shares, hatchets, pitch-forks, goads, mattocks, &c.

The two armies lay in their respective encampments for some time without coming to action, in the course of which the Philistines sent out detached parties, who committed depredations in various parts of the country unmolested. At length a stop was put to their ravages by means of Jonathan, the king's son, whose natural courage was so great as to make him fearless of every kind of danger. After a consultation held with his armour-bearer (who was likewise a man of distinguished intrepidity) it was agreed between them privately to leave the camp, and if possible, get into that of the enemy unperceived. But there was one grand obstacle to surmount before they could execute this design and that was, to pass two very steep and craggy rocks, which divided the army of the Philistines from that of the Israelites. Notwithstanding this difficulty Jonathan and his armour-bearer set about the business, and having, with great difficulty, passed the rocks, got unperceived (it being dark) into the enemy's camp, at

§ St. Jerome observes, that the harvest in Judea began about the end of June, or the beginning of July, in which season thunder and rain was never known, but only in the spring and autumn, the one called the *former*, and the other the *latter rain*. And therefore Samuel, by this preamble, *Is it not wheat-harvest to-day?* meant to signify the greatness of the miracle God was about to work; that he could, in an instant, and at a time when they least expected it, deprive them of all the comforts of life, as they justly deserved, for

rejecting him and his prophet, who was in such favour with God as, by his prayers, to occasion such wonders to be instantaneously produced.

|| It appears that this was one of the frontier towns, and that the Philistines had kept a garrison in it several years, and, most probably, ever since they had possessed themselves of the Ark of the Covenant. The taking of this place must have been of great service to the Israelites, because it opened a way for them to penetrate into the enemy's country.

at a time when they were all at rest, and no ways apprehensive of danger. The two heroes took proper advantage of this favourable opportunity, by immediately falling on the Philistines, twenty of whom they laid dead at their feet. So sudden and unexpected an attack threw the whole army of the Philistines into the greatest consternation, insomuch that, not being able, from the darkness of the night, to distinguish friends from enemies, they fell by each others swords, and thus great numbers of them became the instruments of their own destruction*.

The disturbance in the enemy's camp was soon heard by Saul's army, and the news of it being instantly circulated throughout the country of the Israelites, those who had secreted themselves through fear immediately quitted their hiding-places and repaired to the camp. Encouraged by the increase of his forces, Saul immediately marched against the Philistines, whom he attacked with such fury that they were soon routed, many of them being put to the sword, and the rest obliged to save themselves by flight.

Saul was so elated at this success, and so fully determined, if possible, to extirpate the Philistines, that, to obtain his ends, (as he thought) he laid a very impolitic injunction on his people, namely, that, to prevent any loss of time in pursuing the enemy, they should neither eat or drink till night put an end to the slaughter. *Cursed, said he, be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies.*

It happened that Jonathan (who was a stranger to his malediction) in passing through a wood, with some others, in pursuit of the enemy, found an honey-comb, and being greatly fatigued, he took a piece and eat it. One of the company observing this, admonished him for his conduct, in violating his father's orders. Jonathan immediately desisted, but said, Saul had committed a great indiscretion, in laying such a restraint on the people; for, had they received proper refreshment, they would have pursued the fugitives with more vigour, and either took captive, or put to the sword, a much greater number of the enemy.

After the Israelites had pursued the Philistines till night, during which time some thousands of the enemy were slain, they returned and took possession of the camp. They found in it abundance of spoil, and withal many sheep, which the soldiers (being weary with the fatigues of the day and faint for want of food) immediately slew, and, through their eagerness, eat, together with the blood. This being an offence against their laws, the priests complained of it to the king, who ordered a large stone to be placed in the middle of the camp, the beasts to be killed on it, and the flesh not to be eaten till the blood

had been properly drained from it. This decree was readily obeyed, and Saul erected an altar, on which he offered sacrifices to God for his late success against the Philistines.

Saul, being desirous of improving this victory, thought it adviseable to follow those of the Philistines that had escaped, and to fall on them before they could have time to gather themselves together, by which they would become much more formidable than when dispersed. But, previous to his making this attempt, he desired Ahiah, the high-priest to consult the will of God with respect to these his intentions. This was accordingly done, when the high-priest returned for answer, That he must not set about the intended business on that day. Saul being satisfied that something particular must be the occasion of this, spoke his mind to the high-priest in words to this effect: "There is some cause why God doth not reveal his oracle to us when we ask it, seeing that he has heretofore been so gracious as to prevent our requests by granting them before-hand. There has certainly been some secret sin committed against him which occasions this silence, and I am determined, if possible, to find it out. Now I swear, by the Supreme Majesty of Heaven, that whoever shall be found to be the transgressor, my son Jonathan not excepted, his life shall answer for it."

When the multitude heard this they unanimously agreed to undergo the examination, and for that purpose assembled at a certain spot, to which Saul and Jonathan likewise repaired, and stood by each other. The method taken to discover the offender was, by casting of lots, which being done it appeared to fall between the king and his son. These two again cast lots by themselves, when the lot fell upon Jonathan. In consequence of this Saul asked him, in the hearing of the people, what sin he had committed, and in what part of his life he had been guilty of any wickedness or impiety? Jonathan answered his father in words to this effect: "I have been guilty of no other crime than only tasting, yesterday, as I pursued the enemy, a little honey; and this I did, not knowing your decree to the contrary." Saul told him, though his kindred and relations were dear to him, yet they were but trifling to the obligation he lay under to fulfil the vow he had made, and, therefore, as he was the transgressor, he must make atonement by the forfeiture of his life.

As soon as the people heard this dreadful sentence pronounced against Jonathan, who had won their hearts by his great piety and bravery, they resolved to interpose in his behalf, and to rescue him from his impending danger. They accordingly took him out of the hands of his incensed father, declaring, with an oath, that they would not suffer a hair of that person's head

* How Jonathan and his armour-bearer only could put the whole army of the Philistines into so universal a consternation appears, at first sight, very extraordinary; but when we consider, that they climbed up a way never attempted before,—that they surprised the enemy unawares, and perhaps when the greatest part of them were asleep,—that this army, being composed of different nations, might entertain jealousies and suspicions of each other,—and that the darkness of the night might make them apprehend, the whole

body of the Israelites was come upon them at once, the fright of the Philistines is not so very surprising: and when we add to all this, what is not indeed improbable, that God might, at this instant, infuse a panic fear into the whole host, our wonder will be turned into praise and adoration of that powerful Being, who, when he sees fit, can make the greatest heroes tremble, and put to flight the most formidable armies.

head to be touched, who had been so instrumental in a victory that tended to the preservation of them all. Saul, finding the resoluteness of the people (and, no doubt, at the same time wishing in his heart to preserve his son) made no attempt to oppose their resolution, in consequence of which Jonathan escaped that punishment which might otherwise have befallen him.

After this victory Saul ruled the kingdom with a very high hand, and not only repulsed his enemies wherever they assailed him, but also proved successful in attacking them in various parts, particularly those territories possessed by the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Edomites and the Philistines.

Though Saul's family was not very numerous, yet it was very respectable, and their conduct was such as to acquire the universal good wishes of the people. Abinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz, was his wife; Jonathan, Ishui and Malchishua were his sons; Michal and Merab his daughters; and Abner, his cousin-german, was general of his forces. His body guards, of which he had great numbers, were the tallest and handsomest men that could be selected, and he kept his court in the most splendid manner.

While the Israelites were thus situated in the enjoyment of peace and tranquillity, Samuel one day went to Saul at Gilgal, and told him, that he had a message to deliver to him by the special command of God, and that as the Almighty had been pleased to make him king, in preference to all others, it was his duty to obey the Divine commands, which were to this effect: "That whereas the Amalekites had treated the Hebrews with great cruelty when they came out of Egypt into the land they now possessed, it was the will of God that he should immediately declare war against them; and that, upon conquering them, he should not only put to the sword every man, woman and child, but should likewise destroy their cattle, and every living creature found in their possession."

Saul promised Samuel that the Divine injunctions should be strictly obeyed, and that he would immediately set about the means of carrying them into execution. He accordingly drew together his forces at a place called Telaim, where he ordered them to be numbered, when the whole amounted to 200,000, exclusive of 10,000 belonging to the tribe of Judah.

With this army Saul marched into the country of the Amalekites, and first began to execute his commission by placing several of his companies in ambuscade, who falling suddenly on the inhabitants, put every one to the sword. After this he proceeded to invest the cities and towns, and had such success in his attacks that all opposition was without effect; so that the inhabitants of every place, between Havilah and Shur, were put to the sword, except Agag their king, whom (as Josephus tells us) Saul was induced to preserve on account of the comeliness of his person. — In this Saul disobeyed the Divine commands; for the Amalekites had made themselves so abominable in the sight of heaven, that God had ordered him to destroy all, and not suffer a single creature to exist. The soldiers likewise made a breach on the Divine commands,

by driving away many of the cattle and sheep, and preserving for their own use the most valuable articles.

Saul, having ravaged the greater part of the country belonging to the Amalekites, returned with his army to Gilgal, highly pleased with what he had done, not reflecting that he was deficient in the injunction laid on him before he went on the expedition. His sparing the life of Agag, and the people converting the spoil to their own use, being two articles expressly forbid in his commission, gave great offence to God, who was pleased to intimate his displeasure at Saul's conduct to the prophet Samuel: *Saul, said he, hath turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments.*

This intelligence gave great uneasiness to Samuel, inasmuch that he spent the whole night in prayers and supplications to God that he would pardon the offence Saul had committed. Early the next morning Samuel went to Gilgal, to acquaint Saul with the intelligence he had received from God, and to expostulate with him on the impropriety of his conduct.

As soon as Saul beheld Samuel he eagerly ran to meet him, and, embracing him in his arms, said, *Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord.* To which Samuel replied, *What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep, and lowing of the oxen?* Saul told him they were only some beasts the people had reserved for sacrifices; and that he had destroyed all the Amalekites, except Agag their king. Convinced that this reserve proceeded more from principles of avarice, than those of piety, Samuel answered Saul in words to this effect: "God, says he, delights not so much in sacrifices as in the righteousness of good and just men, that is to say, such as observe his holy will, and strictly keep his commandments. He is not attracted by the sacrifice, but the obedience, without which all oblations are of none effect. What then can you say for yourself in having reserved those things for sacrifice which he expressly ordered should be totally destroyed? *Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.*"

This rebuke, together with the sentence denounced, greatly affected Saul, who immediately made a frank confession of his guilt, saying, *I have sinned: I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words.* Having done this, he endeavoured to apologize for the conduct of his soldiers, by telling Samuel he was fearful, had he prohibited them from taking some of the spoil, that they might have revolted, and himself been exposed to an enraged people. He then earnestly besought of Samuel, that he would pardon the offence he had committed, and be again reconciled to him, that he might worship the Lord. Samuel was so angry with him that he refused complying with his request, and was going to retire; upon which Saul caught hold of his garment to detain him, and, in the scuffle, it was rent asunder. This circumstance was interpreted by Samuel as an omen that Saul would lose his kingdom, which would be given to another that better deserved it. *The Lord, said he, hath rent the kingdom of Israel from*

from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine that is better than thou.

Saul again acknowledged his transgression, and again begged of Samuel that he would forgive his fault and be again reconciled to him. *Honour me, said he, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel; and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God.*

From the earnestness of this second solicitation, and the anxiety that appeared evident on the mind of Saul, Samuel was induced to comply with his request, and accordingly assisted him in sacrificing to the Lord. Having done this Samuel ordered Agag, king of the Amalekites (who had began to entertain some hopes that his life would be spared) to be brought before him. As soon as Agag appeared before Samuel, he said, *Surely the bitterness of death is past.* To which Samuel replied, *As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women.* He then slew Agag with his own hands, immediately after which he left Gilgal, and returned to Ramah, the place of his residence.

This was the last interview Samuel had with Saul, the latter of whom, after the departure of Samuel, retired to his place at Gibeah, where, being thoroughly sensible of the calamities he had brought on himself, by incurring the Divine displeasure for his misconduct, he spent his time in penitence and prayers.

Though Samuel was situated a considerable distance from Saul, he could not forget him, and his mind was greatly agitated on account of the punishment inflicted on him for his disobedience.

The Almighty was pleased to tell Samuel not to grieve himself on Saul's account any longer, seeing that he had rejected him from reigning over Israel. He then bade Samuel take a horn of oil, and go to Jesse, the Bethlehemite, the son of Obed, and anoint one of his sons, whom he had appointed, and would discover to him, to be king over the Israelites. Samuel expressed his fears that if he executed this commission Saul would seek his life; but the Almighty, to remove these apprehensions, and to animate him with courage, bid him take an heifer with him, and when he came to the place where Jesse lived to tell him and all the people that he was come there to sacrifice to the Lord.

In consequence of these Divine directions Samuel set out for Bethlehem, whither he had no sooner arrived than the elders of the town were greatly alarmed, and asked him whether or not he came there peaceably. He told them he was come to sacrifice, and desired them to prepare themselves that they might be ready to attend him. He then went to Jesse, whom he also acquainted with his business, after which he desired him and his sons to attend likewise, and, that

they might be properly qualified, consecrated them on the occasion.

The ceremony of the sacrifice being over, Samuel invited Jesse and his sons to partake of the feast. They readily accepted the invitation, and as soon as Samuel saw Eliab, who was the eldest, and remarkable tall and handsome, he said within himself, "Surely this is the person appointed to be our king." But he soon found himself mistaken; for, on asking of God whether or not he should anoint this person, he received an answer to the following effect: "The Lord seeth not as man sees: thou supposest him to be worthy of a kingdom from his outward appearance, but such honours are not to be bestowed as due to the merit of a person's figure: they are to be given as a reward for the virtuous qualifications of the mind: wherefore, I look unto that man who is perfect in piety and justice, courage and meekness; virtues which truly constitute the beauties of the mind."

On this, Samuel ordered the other sons, who were six in number, to pass him, one by one; which having done, he found, by Divine impulse, that neither of these was the person appointed to be king. In consequence of this Samuel asked Jesse if he had any more sons. He answered, he had one more, whose name was David: that he was the youngest of the whole, and at that time employed in looking after his sheep. Samuel ordered Jesse immediately to send for him, as it was not proper for them to sit down to the feast till he was present. Jesse accordingly sent for his son, who, being naturally exceeding dutiful to his parents, readily obeyed the summons. He had a comely majestic countenance, and as soon as Samuel beheld him, he thought in his own mind that he was the person to be anointed; and he soon became fully satisfied by the voice of the Lord, saying, *Arise, anoint him: for this is he.* Samuel, agreeable to the Divine direction, took out the horn of oil, and anointed David in the presence of his brethren†; immediately after which he departed, and from that day forward David found himself inwardly possessed with a spirit of wisdom, prudence, courage, and other qualifications necessary to constitute a great and mighty prince.

While David grew daily in favour of the Lord, Saul declined more and more: the Spirit of God departed from him, and an evil spirit supplied its place. His mind was agitated with the most perplexing reflections, which at length settled in a confirmed melancholy, and that of such a nature as to be frequently attended with violent perturbations, and sometimes with a direct phrenzy. To alleviate his affliction, some of his attendants advised him to have recourse to music, to which he consenting, they recommended David, the son of Jesse, assuring him

† It is not to be supposed that Samuel, at this time, explained the whole mystery of his anointing David, and probably for this reason, because, had it been known, and come to the ears of Saul, it might have been productive of disagreeable consequences. As it was usual to anoint men to the office of prophet, as well as to the regal dignity, he might leave them to suppose the former, which it is most

likely they did, as David was not much more than fifteen years of age, and therefore too young to be taken for a warrior. Had his brethren suspected that he had been anointed to the regal dignity, it is not probable Eliab would have used him so roughly as he did, when his father afterwards sent him to his brethren at Saul's camp.

him that he was not only an excellent musician, but possessed of every qualification of body and mind that could engage his favour; and, above all, that *the Lord was with him*.

In consequence of this recommendation David was immediately sent for, and brought into the presence of the king. His father Jesse, knowing the custom of the court, had provided him with an handsome present, with which, on delivery, Saul appeared greatly pleased. He was highly delighted with the beauty of David's person; but, when he heard him exercise his skill upon the harp he was pleased beyond measure, inasmuch that it removed for the present all those uneasy and melancholy thoughts which had before so deeply affected him. In short, Saul conceived such a kindness for David, that he made him one of his armour-bearers. He did not, however, constantly reside in the palace, but only attended at such times as the king's malady oppressed him; and when that was removed by David's playing on his harp, he returned to his father's house and attended his flocks.

Notwithstanding the remarkable victory Saul had but lately obtained over the Philistines, yet they were still very numerous, and resolved, if possible, to be revenged on the Israelites. They accordingly gathered together all their forces, and marching towards the Hebrews, pitched their tents on a mountain between Shochoh and Azekah. In consequence of this Saul drew out his forces, and marched them to the mountain directly opposite to that on which the Philistines were encamped, the valley of Elah dividing the two armies.

While they were in this situation there came from the camp of the Philistines one Goliath, a citizen of Gath, a man of a prodigious gigantic stature, being full ten feet high, with arms and armour proportionable. This mighty man, attended by a person carrying his shield, marched down the hill, till he came within hearing of the Israelites, when in the most haughty and imperious terms, he challenged any one of them to single combat, which he said should determine the fate of the war †. *Why, said he, are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and you servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. I defy the armies of Israel this day: give me a man that we may fight together.* Having said this, Goliath retired, but returned the next day, and repeated his challenge, which he continued to do for forty days successively, the Israelites not knowing whom to chuse for his antagonist.

At length, however, the provident Defender of Israel raised his own people a deliverer in the person of young David. In Saul's army were three of the sons of Jesse, to whom their father sent David their brother with necessaries, and to

bring him intelligence of the situation of the Israelites. Soon after David arrived at the camp, the tremendous Goliath again appeared, and repeated his challenge. David, seeing this gigantic Philistine thus insolently taunt the whole army of Israel, was greatly irritated, and hearing of the prodigious reward the king had offered to any one who should slay him, (viz. that he was to give him his own daughter in marriage, and ennoble his family by conferring on them the freedom of Israel) he intimated to his brethren his desire of encountering this formidable hero himself. His elder brother Eliab, thinking the very pretence an instance of the highest presumption, reprimanded him for his rashness, telling him to return to his father, and attend his sheep. But David waved this, by addressing himself to another man, and expressing a steady zeal and unshaken intrepidity for the cause of God, as well as utter contempt of the insolent boastings of the haughty Goliath.

The resolution of this favourite youth at length reached the ears of the king, who sending for David, he told him his mind in the same manner he had done to his brethren: *Let no man's heart, (said he to Saul) fail because of him; thy servant will go, and fight with this Philistine.*

Saul stood amazed at the intrepidity of the youth, but was fearful of trying the issue on so unequal a match. He pointed out to David the danger into which he must inevitably fall by encountering with a man of Goliath's prodigious strength and great military experience. David, finding Saul's diffidence, endeavoured to remove his fears by stating to him two instances of the great feats he had done by the Divine protection, which he related in words to this effect: "On a time, said he, while I was attending my father's sheep, a lion suddenly came among the flock, and ran away with a lamb. I pursued the robber, and having come up with him, rescued the lamb, and put a period to the lion's existence. I had an encounter of the like nature with a bear, which proved equally successful. Now I doubt not, but I shall do with this Philistine as I did with the lion and bear: that he shall no more bid defiance to the army of the Israelites, but that he shall fall a victim, by my means, through the Divine assistance, to his daring presumption."

Saul was so struck with this relation, and the manifest intrepidity which appeared in David's countenance, that he was assured his resolution did not arise from presumptive courage, but Divine inspiration. He therefore said to David, *Go, and the Lord be with thee.* After this he prepared David for the combat, by dressing him in his own armour, and giving him his coat of mail, sword and helmet. David, not having been accustomed to such arms, found them rather burthensome than useful, and told Saul they were much fitter for a prince than a shepherd; begging, at the same time, that he would permit him

† This appears to have been merely a bravado, arising from too great an opinion of his own strength, without any authority from the Philistine army, since, after he was slain, they did not submit to be slaves to the Israelites, as he

declared they would in case he should be vanquished. On the contrary, they made the best of their way into their own country, and afterwards fought many battles with the Israelites.

him to lay them aside, and take his own way. This being granted, David took his shepherd's staff, a sling, and five smooth stones, and with these only he advanced towards his antagonist.

When Goliath saw David he looked upon him with contempt, and, in a haughty and deriding manner, said, "Am I a dog that thou comest to me with staves?" He then cursed David by his gods, and farther said, "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field." David coolly answered, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand, and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee, and I will give thy carcase to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field, that all the earth may know there is a God in Israel. The whole assembly shall see, that the Lord saveth not with the sword and spear: the battle is his, and he will deliver you into our hands."

Goliath advanced towards David with as much expedition as the weight of his armour would permit, at the same time intimating, by his gestures, the contemptible light in which he considered his almost defenceless adversary. David, putting his trust in God, hastened to meet him, and when he thought himself at a proper distance, he took one of the stones out of his bag, put it into his sling, and threw it at the Philistine. The stone went in such a direction as to strike him on the forehead, and that so forcibly, that it penetrated his skull, upon which he immediately fell prostrate on the ground. David seeing this ran directly to Goliath, and drawing the sword of the Philistine from the sheath (not having one of his own) slew him, and cut off his head.

This event threw a very different appearance on the countenances of the contending armies. The Israelites expressed their joy by the loudest acclamations, while the Philistines were so chagrined at the fate of their champion, that they immediately betook themselves to flight. The Israelites, availing themselves of this circumstance, pursued the fugitives as far as Gath and Ekron, killing great numbers in their way; after which they returned, and totally destroyed their camp.

When Saul saw David marching against the Philistine, he enquired of Abner, his general, whose son he was? But Abner not being able to answer him, as soon as he returned from the victory, he introduced him to the king, with the champion's head in his hand. Saul received him with the highest applause, and asking him whose

son he was, he replied, *I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite.*

The great exploit performed by David was of course universally applauded by the people, but no one expressed so entire a satisfaction as Jonathan, the eldest son of Saul. He was himself a prince of distinguished bravery, and was so captivated with David's courage and conduct in this engagement, that he complimented him with his own bow and sword, and contracted a friendship with him, which lasted as long as those two lived together.

The fair commend the youth, the brave approv'd,
But matchless Jonathan admir'd and lov'd:
By ev'ry word and graceful action charm'd,
His princely breast with sacred friendship warm'd:
Insensibly the kindly ardor stole,
And wrought itself within his secret soul:
He gave his sword and bow—The gift was poor,
His noble heart was David's all before.

Though the great exploit performed by David had gained him universal reputation, yet a circumstance occurred which produced him the mortal hatred of the king. On their return from their late victory, among the crowds of the people that came out to meet them, and to grace their triumph, was a chorus of women, who sung to the musical instruments on which they played a certain song, the chief burthen of which was, *Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands* ||.

Saul was so irritated at this superior compliment paid to David, that he grew jealous of him, fearful, lest, in time, he might become so popular among the people as to injure him in the sovereignty. On this account he banished from his mind every sentiment of good will towards David, and, instead thereof, conceived the most rank hatred.

To such a pitch did Saul's malice against David arise, that he resolved on his destruction, which he endeavoured the next day to effect with his own hand. His mind being greatly perplexed, David, as usual, came to divert his melancholy; and while he was playing on his harp before him, not suspecting the least danger, the frantic king, having a javelin in his hand, threw it at him with all his might; but as David was preserved by Providence for wise purposes, the king missed his aim, and David immediately withdrew.

After this remarkable event David was removed from his immediate attendance on the king's person, and made captain over a thousand men. This, indeed, was a more advantageous office

§ It has been objected by some, how David could be unknown to Saul, seeing he had been long with him in his house? To this it is answered, we are not told expressly how long David had been with Saul; and it is well known that there is always a great number of people in the courts of princes, so that there is no wonder that such a young man as David should be so soon forgotten. To this it may be added, that the distemper of Saul's mind must have been such as to make him forget many things that he might other-

wife have remembered.

|| It was common, in antient times, for the women to go out in order to meet the conquerors; and on such occasions they sang songs in praise of their valour. When they said that David killed his ten thousands, they meant that he had killed Goliath, who was so much esteemed among the Philistines, that his life was reckoned more valuable than the lives of ten thousand men.

office than that of armour-bearer; but Saul's bestowing it on David certainly did not arise from respect to him, but, on the contrary, from a design against his life, as he could then employ him in the most dangerous enterprizes.

David, however, escaped the malicious design of Saul; for, having God on his side, he proved successful in all his undertakings. He became not only universally beloved by the people in general, but also those about the court: and such were the graces of his person, and so distinguishedly meritorious his conduct, that he particularly attracted the notice of Saul's other daughter Michal*, who gave evident signs of her wishes to form with him a matrimonial alliance.

Saul took notice of his daughter's affection for David, but did not appear in the least averse to it. On the contrary he used his endeavours to promote her affection, thinking to make her the means of producing an opportunity that might prove effectual in his design against David's life.

After some consideration Saul hit upon a project which he thought would answer his wished-for purposes. He made a proposal, that whoever should kill him an hundred Philistines should have his daughter Michal in marriage. Saul, no doubt, imagined that David, from his renowned courage, would not hesitate to accept this offer, and that the attempt would certainly cost him his life. This he thought the most decent method of obtaining revenge on David, as it would look better to have him destroyed by the Philistines, than by his express orders.

Having formed this plan Saul employed some of his domestics to sound David with respect to his affection for his daughter, and whether he would be willing to receive her in marriage, on the condition stipulated. These emissaries told David he was beloved both by the king and people, and that it was Saul's desire he should become his son-in-law. The answer David gave them was to this effect: "You, said he, may not think it any great matter to be the son-in-law of a mighty prince, but, under the circumstances of my quality and extraction, I am not vain enough even to think of such an honour."

When Saul's messengers had told him what David had said, he sent them back to him with fresh instructions, the substance of which were as follow: "Tell him, said he, I desire neither money nor presents: when I part with my daughter, she shall be bestowed, not sold."

* The other daughter Merab (whom Saul had promised David as a reward for having killed Goliath) he gave in marriage to another, one Adriel, a Meholathite.

† The reason why Saul exacted the *foreskins* of David was, to prevent all cheat or collusion, and that he might be sure they were Philistines only whom he killed. Had he demanded the heads only of so many men, David (he might think) would, perhaps, cut off those of his own subjects, and bring them instead of the Philistines. But now the Philistines being the only neighbouring people who were uncircumcised, (for the Arabians, as descended from Ishmael, and all the other nations which sprung from Esau, were circumcised as well as the Hebrews) in producing their foreskins there could be no deception. Besides, this would be a gross insult on the Philistines in general, and Saul was desirous of making David as odious as possible, hoping that, one time or other, he might fall into their hands, in which

"I am determined to give her to a man, not renowned for his wealth, but his courage, and other virtuous accomplishments. Let him only bring me the foreskins † of an hundred Philistines, and they will be more acceptable to me than all the possessions in the world. To such a man will I freely bestow my daughter, which will be an honour to her, and give me the most secret satisfaction."

David was so pleased with Saul's proposition, (not suspecting his intentions were dishonest, but only calculated to confirm a tie of friendship) that he did not consider the difficulty of the enterprize, or how far it was likely to be practicable. He immediately set out with his men in search of the enemy, in order to execute what was desired, and to obtain the king's daughter in marriage. By the assistance and bravery of his men, he succeeded in the undertaking, and having killed two hundred Philistines, brought their foreskins to the king, who, agreeable to the covenant made between them, gave him his daughter Michal to wife.

Thus did Saul's machinations against the life of David prove abortive, and, instead of procuring his death, he only promoted the honour and interest of him whom he meant to destroy. David grew every day more and more the favourite of the people, which so incensed Saul that, unable to contain himself, he formed the resolution of having David dispatched, and ordered Jonathan his son, with some of his most favourite servants, to perpetrate the horrid deed.

Jonathan was thunderstruck when he received these orders from his father. He loved David to his soul, and determined to pervert the base designs of the king. He accordingly hastened to David, and told him Saul's intentions, advising him, for that night, to secrete himself, and that the next morning he would take the opportunity of speaking to his father in his behalf, and endeavour, as far as lay in his power, to appease his wrath. David, knowing the fidelity of Jonathan, took his advice, and immediately retired to a private place at some distance from the palace.

Early the next morning Jonathan paid a visit to his father, and finding him alone, he took the opportunity of fulfilling the promise he had the over-night made to his friend David. After reminding Saul of the orders he had given for taking away David's life, he addressed himself to him as follows ‡: "Let not the king, said he,

case there could not be the least doubt but they would seek revenge by depriving him of his life.

‡ The speech Josephus puts into Jonathan's mouth on this occasion is expressed in these terms: "Father, says he, I cannot conceive the reason of your having taken so great a dislike to David as to give orders for his death. Has he committed any offence, for which thou thinkest he deserves to die? Was not thy life, in a great measure, preserved through his means; and have not the Philistines felt the force of his avenging arm? Did he not vindicate the honour of our nation from the scandal of a forty days affront in the challenge of the giant? Did he not purchase my sister for his wife at your price by bringing you what you desired? Surely, instead of your resentment he is entitled to your esteem and tenderness, not only for his distinguished courage, but his close alliance with your family. Consider with yourself what great injury you will do

"he, sin against his servant David: because he
 "hath not sinned against thee; and because his
 "works have been very good. It was he who
 "slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a
 "great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it,
 "and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou
 "sin against innocent blood, to slay David with-
 "out a cause?"

This forcible speech made such an impression on Saul, that he bound himself by oath never to do any thing more to the injury of David: *As the Lord liveth*, said he, *he shall not be slain.*

Jonathan, as soon as possible, hastened with the welcome news to David, told him the particulars of all that had passed, and assured him he need not be afraid, for his father had made a solemn vow never to do him the least injury. He then took David with him to court, and presenting him to the king, a seeming reconciliation took place between them §.

The Philistines having again made war against the Israelites, and brought into the field a very considerable army, Saul ordered David to march with all expedition to give them battle. David obeyed the king's orders, and meeting the Philistines he fell on them, and obtained a complete victory, the greater part being slain, and the remainder put to flight.

Pleased with this success, David hastened to communicate (as he thought) that news which would be agreeable to the king. But Saul, instead of expressing his satisfaction at the victory, appeared melancholy and dejected. He was jealous of David's increasing reputation, and imagined that what tended to his honour must be prejudicial to himself. He forgot the obligations he was under to David, and the vow he had so lately made not to injure him. Pride and enmity proved predominant over reason, justice and gratitude, and he again resolved to take away the life of the innocent David.

Being one day attacked with a fit of his old disorder the phrenzy, Saul sent for David to divert him by playing on the harp. David accordingly obeyed, but while he was thus exercising his skill Saul suddenly arose, and taking up a javelin threw it with all his might at David. The

javelin luckily missed him, and stuck in the wall; upon which David hastily left the room, and ran to his own house, where he continued the remainder of the day.

In the mean time Saul sent a body of his guards to watch David's house, and to prevent him making his escape, ordering them, as soon as daylight appeared in the morning, to seize and dispatch him.

Michal, David's wife, being apprized of the orders given by the king to his guards, told her husband the danger he was in, and that if he did not make his escape before morning, he would certainly be put to death. David readily took his wife's advice, upon which she let him down, by the assistance of a rope, from a back window of the house, and not being perceived by the guards, he made his escape.

As soon as David was departed Michal took an image ||, the head of which she covered with goat's hair, and putting it into the bed, covered it up in such a manner as to make it appear like a human person. Early in the morning, when the guards asked for David she told them he was sick; upon which they, not knowing how to proceed, returned to Saul, and acquainted him with the intelligence they had received from David's wife.

Saul, fired with indignation, ordered the guards immediately to return, and bring David in whatever situation they found him, for he was determined to put him to death. The guards accordingly returned, and went into the bed-chamber in expectation of finding David, and executing the king's commands; but, behold, when they uncovered the cloathes, instead of the person they sought after, they discovered nothing more than a lifeless image. On this the guards immediately returned to Saul, and acquainted him with the trick that had been played on them by Michal; upon which he sent for her, and, in very severe terms, upbraided her for her conduct. Michal excused herself in the best manner she could: she told her father she did it through fear, as David had threatened her life. That it was not done from choice, but necessity; and that she thought he was not so anxious for the

"do your daughter, by making her feel the miseries of a
 "widow, before she has tasted the enjoyments of a mo-
 "ther. Let me, therefore, my dear father, intreat of
 "you to reflect on these things, and to be more moderate in
 "your determinations. Remember, it was this person who
 "relieved you from bodily complaints of the most horrid
 "nature; and remember, that it was him, next under God,
 "who delivered us from our most implacable enemies.
 "These are benefits of the most distinguished nature, and,
 "if forgot, will stain your character with the sin of ingrati-
 "tude."

§ The conduct of Jonathan, not only in this affair, but also various others that succeeded, is highly meritorious. When his father ordered him to kill David he disobeyed the command, and, instead of being accessory to the murdering of him, pleaded his innocence and merit as reasons for his being saved. He discovered to David his father's design and fixed resolution of destroying him; in doing of which he neither acted inconsistent with his duty as a child, or to the allegiance he owed his father as a subject. He who knows of a conspiracy against an innocent person's life, and doth not discover it, or who kills such a one by another's instigation or command, is himself a murderer; and no duty to a father, or allegiance to a prince, can oblige any one to shed innocent blood. Jonathan was therefore so far from acting

contrary to his duty and allegiance, in refusing to become his father's instrument in murdering David, that he gave a noble instance of filial piety, affection, and duty, in his repeated endeavours to preserve him from so unnatural and atrocious a crime; and humanity and virtue will ever applaud him for the generous concern he expressed for the honour of his father, and the preservation of his friend. It is to be observed, that Jonathan ever considers David as an innocent person, and pleads for him to his father, not as a rebel, or notorious offender, to obtain his pardon, but as a person having never done any thing to forfeit Saul's favour, or his own life. And therefore, Jonathan must be commended in disobeying his father's orders, and doing all that laid in his power to avert Saul's designs of taking away David's life.

|| In the Hebrew it is *teraphim*; which *teraphim*, it plainly follows from hence, must have been figures of the human form; for the design of Michal was manifestly to deceive the messengers of Saul, by shewing them something in a bed so far resembling a man as to make them believe it was David himself. We are told that women, in those times, were accustomed to have figures made in the likeness of their husbands, that when they were absent they might have their image to look at. If this was the case, Michal's image, most probably, was one of that kind.

the destruction of David as for her preservation. Saul admitted this excuse, forgave his daughter, and restored her to his favour.

In the mean time David went to the prophet Samuel at Ramah, to whom he related all the snares that had been laid for him by Saul, and the manner in which he had effected his escape. Samuel, for the better security of David's person, left Ramah, and, taking him with him, went to a place called Naioth, where was a school*, or college, of prophets.

When Saul understood where David was, and with whom, he dispatched a body of men to Naioth, with orders to seize David, and bring him immediately to the palace. But when they came near the place, and beheld Samuel teaching and instructing the young prophets, they were suddenly impressed with the spirit of prophecy, and could not return. In consequence of this Saul sent other messengers, and after them, others again; but no sooner did they come near the place than they were all affected in the like manner. At length Saul, impatient of these delays, went himself; but as he drew near the place, the spirit of prophecy seized him also, so that he went along prophesying† till he came in sight of David and Samuel, when he stripped off his cloathes, and laid himself on the ground, in which posture he remained till the next morning, when he arose, and returned home.

David took this opportunity of leaving Naioth, and paid a visit to his trusty friend Jonathan, to whom he related the unkind behaviour of his father, which he thought exceeding grievous, as he had not committed any manner of injury or injustice against him. Jonathan told him not to judge rashly, nor place too much confidence in the tales of other men; that he was sure if his father meant him any harm he would have made

him privy to his intentions, and, had that been the case, he should certainly have told him of it, and put him upon his guard. David then affirmed with an oath what he had said relative to Saul's unkindness, and told Jonathan not to be too credulous when the life of his friend was at stake.

This weighty argument greatly affected Jonathan, who begged David to make his mind as easy as possible, for that he would do him all the services that laid in his power. *Whatsoever thy soul desireth*, said he, *I will even do it for thee*. The reply David made to this was to the following effect: "I am very sensible of your good-will, and readiness to serve me. Now tomorrow there will be a new moon, and consequently a festival. At such times, you know, it has been customary for me to sit at meat with the king: but if you think well of it, I will go out of the city, and secrete myself in some private place in the fields, where I will abide till the *third day at even*, when you can come and inform me of all that has passed. If the king asks for me, tell him I am gone to Bethlehem, to celebrate the day with my own tribe, and that I had your permission. If he speaks kindly, you may take it for granted that he has no malice in his heart against me; but if otherwise, depend upon it he bears me a grudge."

Jonathan promised David he would do every thing he desired, and that whatever should be the issue he would not fail giving him a just account. They then retired together into the fields, where Jonathan made a covenant with David, and, addressing himself to God, as a witness of the integrity of his heart‡, again repeated his promises, that he would leave nothing unattempted, which might conduce to his preservation. He then told David to keep in his hiding

* At what period these schools of the prophets were at first instituted is nowhere indicated in scripture: But as the first mention we find of them is in Samuel's time, we can hardly suppose, those before were much superior. It may be presumed that the sad degeneracy of priesthood at first occasioned the institution of these places, for the better education of those that were to succeed in the sacred ministry, whether as prophets or priests. According to the places that are specified in scripture, (1 Sam. x. 5, 10. and xix. 20. 2 Kings ii. 5. iv. 38. and xxii. 14.) they were first erected in the cities of the Levites, which, for the more convenient instruction of the people, were dispersed up and down in the several tribes of Israel. In these places the prophets had convenient colleges built (whereof Naioth seems to be one) for their abode; and, living in communities, had some one of distinguished note (very probably by Divine election) set over them to be their head or president. Here it was that they studied the law, and learned to expound the several precepts of it. Here it was that, by previous exercise, they qualified themselves for the reception of the spirit of prophecy, whenever it should please God to send it upon them. Here it was, that they were instructed in the sacred art of psalmody, or (as the scripture calls it, 1 Chron. xxv. 1, 7.) in prophesying with harps, with psalteries and cymbals: and hence it was, that, when any blessings were to be promised, judgments denounced, or extraordinary events predicted, the messengers were generally chosen: so that these colleges were seminaries of Divine knowledge, and nurseries of that race of prophets, which succeeded from Samuel to the time of Malachi.

† This prophesying of the messengers and Saul was certainly directed by the Wisdom of Providence, in order to prevent the former from seizing, and the latter from murdering, David, and probably, in the same fit of rage, Samuel and the whole company of prophets. Whether this

prophesying consisted in predicting some future events, such as Saul's destruction, and David's advancement to the throne, we cannot tell; but certainly it was productive of one good effect, namely, the preservation of the life of one destined to sit on the throne of Israel. The change in the messengers of Saul was great; but that wrought in Saul himself was astonishing. He came to wreak his vengeance: but instead of a murderer he becomes a prophet, and puts himself naked into the hands of Samuel, the prophets and David, who might have taken what advantage they pleased of so singular an adventure, even to the cutting off of Saul, and raising David to the throne. But they abhorred the thought; and as the Spirit of the Lord kept Saul in the condition he was till David was safe, so Saul was safe during the time he was *naked*, that is, destitute of his royal garments. A noble evidence this, of the innocence and loyalty of Samuel, the prophets and David, whilst, at the same time it affords a pleasing instance to a generous and compassionate mind, of the care of Providence over persecuted virtue, and of the impotence of human malice towards those whom God, in his great wisdom, pleases to preserve.

‡ The speech Josephus puts into the mouth of Jonathan, on this occasion, is very tender and pathetic: "That God (says he, looking up to heaven) who sees all things, and is omnipresent, knows the utmost secrets of my heart: and when I have done this, whether it be for or against thee, I will not lose a moment till I have informed thee of it. God himself knows how earnestly I have prayed to him for your safety. That God is now with thee, and will not forsake thee, but (whether my father Saul or myself should prove thy enemy) will keep thee safe and unhurt. Remember the things I have now told thee, and if it should be my fate to suffer death for pleading in your behalf, do you supply my place, and acknowledge my services, by being a father to my children."

hiding place for three days, at the expiration of which he would make known to him, by certain tokens, the issue of his embassy. The tokens were these: that he should come attended by a boy, and that as soon as he entered the field he would shoot three arrows. If the arrows fell between him and the boy, he might be assured that all was well; but if any one of them passed him, he might take it for granted there was danger. Having said this, they embraced each other, and parted, Jonathan returning to the palace, and David retiring to the spot appointed for his concealment.

The next day, which was the feast of the New Moon, Saul took his usual seat at the table, his son Jonathan being placed on his right hand, and Abner, his captain-general, on the left; but the seat of David was left vacant. Saul took no notice of his absence the first day, supposing he might not be properly qualified || to attend; but missing him the second day, he sternly asked Jonathan what occasioned the son of Jesse* to be absent from the feast two days together? Jonathan told him, he had given him permission to go to Bethlehem, to feast with his own tribe on the occasion. Saul, being conscious of the friendship that subsisted between his son and David, was irritated at his having given him the indulgence required, and not being able to contain himself, fell into a most violent passion. He called Jonathan a traitor and an enemy to his country; told him he was an abettor of, and confederate with, David; and that he was a conspirator against his own family. *As long, said he, as the son of Jesse liveth, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore, now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.*

Jonathan, in a very cool and respectful manner, begged his father to tell him what capital offence David had committed, for that he had never known him guilty of the least disobedience. This increased Saul's rage to a much higher pitch than before, insomuch that, snatching up a javelin, he threw it with all his might at Jonathan, whom he would certainly have sacrificed to his resentment had it not luckily missed him.

This violent outrage convinced Jonathan of his father's real hatred to David, and that he was determined to put a period to his life. He therefore quitted the company as soon as possible, and, retiring to his chamber, spent the whole night in prayer and supplication to God for the safety of his friend. Early the next morning he took his bow and arrows, and, attended by a boy, went into the fields under pretence of shooting, but in reality to discover to David the disposition of his father, as had been agreed between them. He conveyed the first intelligence by shooting the arrows, two of which fell be-

tween him and the boy; and the third passed him. He then told the boy to gather up the arrows and bring them to him; which having done, he gave him his bow, and ordered him to return home.

As soon as the boy was departed Jonathan proceeded towards the place where David had concealed himself, in order to fulfil his promise by telling him all that had passed since they were last together. David, knowing from the token of the arrows, that the king was inveterate against him, was anxious to know the particulars, and therefore left his place to meet Jonathan. As soon as they approached each other, David fell prostrate on the ground, and bowed himself three times. Jonathan immediately raised him from the ground, and, after mutual embraces, told him all that had passed between him and his father: that he was implacable and determined to destroy him, and therefore he advised him to make his escape as fast as possible. They then made fresh protestations to each other, of perpetual friendship, and having again embraced and wept with each other, Jonathan left him, with fervent prayers to God that he would accompany him wherever he went.

David, agreeable to the advice of his friend, left the place of his retirement, and went to the city of Nob †, where, at that time, stood the tabernacle, and where Ahimelech was priest. Knowing who he was, and not having any attendants with him, Ahimelech took notice of it, and asked him the reason ‡. David told him, he was come on very particular business at the express command of the king: that as it was of a private nature, he had, for the present, discharged his train; but that they were to meet him at a certain time and place he had appointed. He then told Ahimelech he was greatly distressed for necessaries to prosecute his journey, and that he should consider it as the most friendly office if he would supply him with such as he wanted, particularly bread. This request Ahimelech cheerfully granted; upon which David told him he would greatly increase the obligation if he could furnish him with a sword, or spear, and some pieces of ammunition. The priest told him he had no other arms than the sword that cut off the head of Goliath, and if he chose to accept that, it was at his service.—[An unfortunate circumstance attended this conversation between David and Ahimelech, there happening to be within hearing a servant of Saul's, named Doeg, an Edomite, who enjoyed the office of chief herdsman to the king.]

David, being thus provided with necessaries for a journey, and having with him the sword of Goliath, left Nob, and went to the city of Gath, which belonged to Achish, king of the Philistines. He had not been here long before he

|| It is probable that Saul imagined something had happened to David by which he had been polluted, such as the touching a dead body, in which case it would not have been proper for him to attend on this occasion.

* Saul's calling David the son of Jesse was spoke by way of derision, thereby intimating to those who were present, that he despised him for the meanness of his birth.

† The city of Nob belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, and was situated about four leagues from Gibeah, not far from

Anathoth. It was in the north part of the sacerdotal cities, and it is probable that Saul ordered the tabernacle to be removed from Shiloh to this place.

‡ From the whole of this affair it is evident that Ahimelech knew nothing of the circumstances of David. He was insensible of Saul's displeasure against him, or of his determined resolution to destroy him; and, therefore, as he was the king's son-in-law, he was surprized to see him without any attendants.

he was known, and the king informed of his being the person who had so often defeated and destroyed the Philistines. In consequence of this information David was taken before Achish, when, to avoid the danger that threatened him, he feigned madness or an epilepsy, which he did to such perfection, that the king, after rebuking the officers for bringing a madman into his presence, order him to be discharged.

The next day David left Gath, and took up his residence in a cave near Adullam †. His relations and friends soon hearing where he was came flocking to him, together with many malcontents, and men of desperate fortunes, the whole number of whom amounted to about four hundred.

This junction was very acceptable to David; but his mind was greatly distressed on account of his aged parents, whom he feared would fall victims to the malice of Saul. He therefore applied to the king of Moab, beseeching him to take them under his protection. The king readily complied with David's request, received them with great cordiality, and treated them with the most distinguished respect.

David and his company continued for some time in the cave of Adullam, till at length he was advised, by the prophet Gad, who attended him, to return to the land of Judah; which he accordingly did, and took up his station in the forest of Hareth.

Saul, being informed of David's situation, and the number of men he had with him, was greatly alarmed. He knew his natural intrepidity and was fearful of the consequences. He therefore convened an assembly of his friends, captains, and the tribe to which he belonged, at Gibeah; who being met, he addressed them in words to this effect: "Ye men of Benjamin, said he, ye cannot be insensible of the many good offices I have done you, and that through my means many of you have been advanced to the highest posts of honour. Wherefore I now ask, whether you expect greater favours from the hands of the son of Jesse than ye have received from me? I am informed that ye are all ready to revolt to him; and that ye are countenanced in your conduct by my son Jonathan. I am no stranger to the solemn league and confederacy between him and David; and of his abetting the cause of my adversaries with his power, interest and council."

As soon as Saul had finished his speech, Doeg,

the king's herdman, (who overheard all that had passed between David and Ahimelech the priest at Nob) arose, and related the particulars in words to this effect: "When, says he, I went to Ahimelech the priest, in the city of Nob, I saw the son of Jesse, who had come thither to consult the oracle. Ahimelech furnished him with conveniences for his journey, and, as an instrument of defence, gave him the sword with which he had cut off the head of Goliath."

In consequence of this declaration, Saul immediately sent for Ahimelech, and all the priests that were in the city of Nob. As soon as Ahimelech appeared before Saul, he thus addressed him: "Why, said he, have ye conspired against me, thou, and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day."

Ahimelech, being entirely innocent, endeavoured to defend himself against the king's unjust charge in words to this effect: "How, says he, could I do less than entertain a person so honourable as David, and so highly in favour with my prince? Especially when he came in the king's name, and about his affairs? As to my enquiring of the Lord for him, it was not the first time: thou knowest I have often enquired of the Lord for him before. And as to any conspiracy against thee, far be it from me; I can safely answer for myself and family, we know nothing of it ‡."

Notwithstanding the justness of this defence, it availed little with Saul, whose resentment was so great, and his passions so ungovernable, that he not only ordered Ahimelech, but likewise all the priests with him, to be put to the sword. The guards who stood by, and heard Ahimelech's defence, would not undertake so barbarous an office; but Doeg, who had been their accuser, at the king's command, became their executioner, and, with his sacrilegious hand, slew no less than eighty-five persons, all of whom were of the sacerdotal order.

Nor did Saul's bloody resentment stop here. He immediately dispatched a party of soldiers to the city of Nob, with orders that they should kill not only men, women and children, but likewise destroy the cattle, and every living creature they found in the place §.

Saul's intentions were, totally to have extirpated the family of Ahimelech, but it happened, that one of his sons, named Abiathar, fortunately escaped

† Adullam was a town of considerable note belonging to the tribe of Judah; and near it was a rock of the same name, in which was a cave naturally strong and well fortified; and here David retreated. Most of the mountains of Palestine were full of caverns, whither the inhabitants of the villages generally retired for safety in times of war.

‡ The defence made by Ahimelech to David, as related by Josephus, is to this effect: "What I did, says he, was not to gain the esteem of David, but to promote your service. I did not receive him as your enemy, but as the faithfullest of your friends and officers, and, what is still more, as the son of a great sovereign. How should I imagine him to be your enemy on whom you have conferred the most distinguished honour? It was more reasonable for me to suppose him one of your dearest friends. If he consulted me about the will of God, it is not the

"first time he has done it, nor the first time I have given him an answer. He told me he came from you on business of the most important nature, and if I had not relieved his wants, it would have been an indignity to you more than to him. Wherefore I beseech you not to blame me, even though you should find David guilty as you suspect. The service I did him was a matter of respect to the king's son-in-law and the king's military officer, not to the person or interest of David."

§ The learned Josephus has, on this occasion, made a most inimitable descant on the abuse of power in men, when once from a low they come to be exalted to an high station in life. After mentioning the cruelty of Saul in putting to death the priests and destroying the inhabitants of Nob, he proceeds thus: "While men, says he, are low, poor, subject to laws and penalties, and, in truth, under
" the

escaped and fled to David, to whom he related the particulars of his father's conduct, and the destruction of his kindred. David was greatly afflicted when he heard of Saul's cruelty, and the more so as he considered himself, in some measure, as the innocent occasion of it. "I thought, said he, when I saw Doeg at your father's house, he would calumniate me before the king; and am sorry to find my conjectures were too well founded. I lament that so melancholy a circumstance should have taken place on my account: but fear not, Abiathar, place yourself under my protection, and I will use my utmost endeavours to shield you from all danger."

While David was in the forest of Hareth, the Philistines made considerable depredations in various parts of the country belonging to the Israelites, and at length made themselves masters of Keilah, a city belonging to the tribe of Judah. Intelligence of this being given to David, he resolved to march with his army against them, but not before he had consulted the Divine Oracle ||. Having done this, and received a full authority from God to undertake the enterprise, he accordingly proceeded to Keilah, whither he had no sooner arrived, than he fell on the Philistines, whom he totally defeated, great numbers of them being slain, and the rest put to flight. By this defeat the inhabitants of Kei-

lah were reinstated in their possessions, besides having a considerable booty in cattle left by their enemies.

The news of this action soon reached the ears of Saul, who supposing David would fortify himself in the place, sent an army to invest it. In the mean time David, having consulted the Divine Oracle, and being informed that the inhabitants of Keilah, would prove perfidious to him, he left it before the arrival of Saul's army, and retired, with his men to a wood in the deserts of Ziph*.

Saul, not knowing whither David had fled, could not pursue him. But Jonathan, his son, having received private intelligence of his abode, immediately repaired to him, and gave him all the comfort and encouragement he could. He assured him his father's malice could never reach him: that he doubted not but the time would come when he should see him king of Israel; and that his father was conscious he was destined to that office by the will of Providence. They then renewed the league of friendship formerly made between them, and, after embracing each other, parted †.

The inhabitants of Ziph were very officious in sending intelligence to Saul where David was, at the same time telling him, that if he would assist them with a proper force, they would engage to deliver him into his hands. Saul thanked

"the necessity of appearing honest for want of power to be wicked, how temperate, just, humane, nay, how religious do they pretend to be! they live as if they acknowledged a Providence, and believed the Omnipotence of an all-seeing God. But no sooner do they come to an advanced station, than they become quite different creatures: like actors on the stage, they lay aside their manners with their dress, and change both the scene and the person. They grow proud and imperious, and pay no respect either to God or man. Instead of being pious, and administering that justice which alone can secure them from detraction, they live and act as if they thought either God knew not what they did, or as if their elevation placed them above the reach of Divine justice. When this arrogant vanity is on the wing, what confusion ensues! They govern by passion, not reason: they unjustly take umbrage at some, and bestow their favours with partiality to others. They endeavour to make the world believe their conduct is directed by the will of heaven, though at the same time they have not the least thought of futurity. Those who have done them any signal services, they compliment with honours and rewards; but then it is in the power of any base incendiary not only to divest them of their dignities, but also their lives; and all this without trial, or even examination. This tyranny does not so much affect the real guilty who deserve punishment, as it does those who frequently suffer on the most erroneous accusations.—The difference thus stated between a low and elevated situation, in the same person is evidently manifested in Saul, who, on a bare suspicion of some injury done him by Ahimelech, not only caused him and all the priests to be put to death, but likewise the inhabitants of that city which entertained the Tabernacle of God."

|| This was one of the most noble adventures of David's life, and perhaps the most extraordinary of any recorded in history. Another man in David's place would have rejoiced at this invasion, and perhaps encouraged it; and this both from self-preservation and policy: First, because he had nothing to fear for himself, whilst Saul had such an enemy upon his hands. And, secondly, because the distress of his country was the likeliest means to bring Saul to reason, and force him to recall, and be reconciled to, his best companion. But David was governed by other than these narrow views: nor safety nor honour were desirable to him, purchased by the distress of his country and his friends: his bosom beat with an earnest desire to relieve Keilah: but it was not an adventure to be unadvisedly undertaken; and therefore we

are assured, that he enquired of God, saying, *shall I go, and smite these Philistines?* None but a hero could put the question; and none but God could resolve it. *And the Lord said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.*

* This mountainous wilderness was within the precincts of the tribe of Judah, and on the confines of Edom. It is supposed to have had its name from the Hebrew word *Zepheth*, which signifies *pitch*, it being remarkable for abounding in that article.

† Jonathan's conduct in this singular transaction appears truly disinterested, generous and great. He could not now be ignorant of David's destination to the throne of Israel, by the will of God, and knew that nothing could prevent his succession to it, as God had appointed it. In such a situation how does he act? He scorns by fraud and violence to attempt the life of the man whom God had fixed on to be king, even in preference to himself; but seeks him out in the wilderness, where his father was hunting him to destruction, *and strengthens his hand in God*: not by promising to assist him in dispossessing his father of the kingdom, or disturbing and distressing his government; not by entering into any conspiracy or plot with him against his father's interest and honour; but by comforting him under his cruel persecution, and assuring him of God's protection from the hand or power of his father, his future advancement to the crown, and his own confidence in David's friendship, that he should be advanced to the highest honours in his court. He lets him know also that Saul his father very well knew that David should be his successor; and that Jonathan said the truth in this, is evident from what Saul himself said to David but a little while after, 1 Sam. chap. xxiv. 20. In this whole affair, therefore, between Jonathan and David, nothing passed but what was perfectly consistent with the allegiance and duty of these two eminent friends to their common sovereign and father: there was no treason talked of; no event spoken of, but what was known to Saul equally as to Jonathan; not any treasonable measures concerted to precipitate and hasten the event, before the season appointed by Providence; nor any covenant entered into by Jonathan, to engage with David in any common cause against his own father. David's succession to the crown after Saul was certainly known both to Saul and Jonathan: and the only circumstance in which Jonathan's conduct differed from his father's, was, that with respect to an event which both of them foresaw would certainly come to pass, Jonathan was for quietly submitting to it, as an appointment of God; whilst Saul was for practising every expedient, if possible, to prevent it.

thanked them for the intelligence, and immediately sent a body of men to assist them in the execution of their intentions, resolving soon to follow them with his whole army. But David, being apprized of the conspiracy of the Ziphites, baffled all their schemes, by retiring, with great precipitation, to a rock in the wilderness of Maon.

Saul, having received intelligence whither David had retired, marched against him, and pressed him so close, that the two armies were only separated by a narrow valley. Saul's intentions were, to encompass the army of David, in order to prevent their escape; but before he could carry this design into execution, news was brought him, that the Philistines had broken in upon the Hebrews, and were ravaging their country; so that Saul was forced to give up the indulgence of his private resentment for the public good, and to divert his arms another way.

Thus, by the interposition of Providence was David delivered from one of the most immediate dangers of his life; and from this incident he called the place *Sela-bammalekoth* which signifies, *the rock of divisions*. David, however, not thinking himself safe here, left the place, and took shelter, with his army, among the strong holds in the wilderness of Engedi †.

Saul, having defeated the Philistines, and received intelligence where David had retired, selected 3000 of his choicest men, and marched against him with the greatest expedition. David and his men had concealed themselves in a cave, which was very deep and wide, and extended a considerable distance in length. It happened that when Saul came to this cave, he had occasion to give a loose to nature, and (not suspecting the place was inhabited) retired from his army, and went into it for that purpose. One of David's men seeing Saul, and knowing him, communicated the intelligence to David, telling him, he had now the opportunity of cutting off the head of his mortal enemy, for that God had delivered Saul into his hands. But David rejected the proposition with abhorrence, saying, "God forbid I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed." He then (to shew Saul how much he had been in his power) went softly, and cut off the skirt of his upper garment §.

As soon as Saul left the cave, David followed, and called after him. The king, well knowing the voice, turned about, when David, with great

reverence and respect, addressed him in words to this effect: "What an unhappy thing it is, says he, when a great prince so listens to the tongues of calumniators and detractors, as to suspect the integrity of his tried and most faithful friends! How can you excuse yourself to God for committing so enormous a wickedness as to desire the death of a person, who, this very day, had it in his power to revenge himself by depriving you of your existence! I could as easily have taken your head from your shoulders, as this piece of stuff from your mantle (shewing the skirt he had cut off) but I had not the heart to commit so vindictive an act; while you, at the same time, without the least scruple of conscience, pursue me with a most injurious persecution. But the Lord judge between us, and, if I have done any thing, either in thought or deed, to thy detriment, let me be punished as I deserve."

The graceful and modest manner in which David delivered this speech, and the circumstance of his sparing the king's life when he had it in his power to take it away, made such an impression on Saul, that he burst into a flood of tears; after which he addressed David in words to this effect: "Thou hast been the Author of many good things to me, but I of many calamities to thee. From the transactions of this day it appears manifestly evident that you are designed by Providence to be ruler over the kingdom of Israel, and that the whole nation will be subject to your government. Wherefore, I have this request to make, that you will promise, on oath, to forgive all the injuries I have done you; and that when you come to be possessed of the kingdom, you will be merciful to my family."

David promised all that Saul requested, upon which they parted, and Saul immediately returned home; but David, not chusing to trust to his fair words, kept himself close in the holds of Engedi.

About this time died the prophet Samuel, a man universally respected by the Hebrews for his great probity and virtue. He was buried at Ramah ||, and the people testified their grief for him by the most distinguished lamentations. He died in the 98th year of his age, twelve of which he governed Israel, alone, and eighteen as a judge in conjunction with Saul.

How singular was the character * and piety of Samuel! Devoted to God from his birth, and

† The word En-gedi, in the Hebrew language, signifies, *the kid's fountain*; from whence, probably, the neighbouring region took its name, because there they watered their flocks. Eusebius places it on the confines of the Dead Sea, to the west. With him it was famous for excellent *balm*, and with Solomon, in his Song, for *vineyards*. It is now called *Angedi*.

§ If it be asked, how David could do this without Saul's perceiving it? the answer may be, that this possibly might be some loose upper garment, which Saul might put off, and lay aside at some distance from him, upon this occasion; and that, as there were several rooms, or particular cells, in these large caverns, which might have secret passages from one another, Saul, at the mouth of one of these cells, might lay down this upper garment, which David perceiving, and knowing all the passages of the place, might go some secret way,

and cut off some small part of it. Nor could the noise, which David's motion might make be well heard by Saul, because it must have been drowned by a much greater noise, which Saul's army, waiting for him at the mouth of the cave, may be supposed to make.

|| In the reign of the emperor Arcadius his body was removed to Constantinople, where (as St. Jerome informs us) it was received, both by the clergy and laity, with joy unspeakable, and honours almost infinite.

* A celebrated writer, in describing the character of Samuel says, "He was, indeed, an excellent governor, and, through his whole administration, above vanity, corruption, or any private views. Those who attend to his life may observe that he was modest without meanness, mild without weakness, firm without obduracy, and severe without harshness."

and worthy to be so ! Early dedicated to the divinity, and hallowed by his influence ! Descended from prophets, himself a greater. The service of God made the early business of his life ; nor was it ever interrupted by any thing but the service of his country.

The Scriptures are certainly the delight of life, but the pleasure of perusing them is always heightened when they demonstrate their own veracity. No man in his senses, in the vigour of life, and in the age of ambition and avarice, forced by no danger, urged by no guilt, and pressed by no infirmity of mind or body, ever yet, voluntarily, and of his own choice, resigned the supreme power, secluded his sons from the succession, and elected two strangers to it, in succession, neither of whom he had ever seen before. Samuel did all this ; and therefore, when the Scriptures assure us he did it by the Divine command, we cannot help believing them : the narration carries its own irresistible evidence along with it.

Happy Samuel ! Exalted to supreme power,

without ambition ; exerting it without oppression or avarice, and resigning it without reluctance, when his God commanded ! Retiring, (rare felicity) with undiminished dignity ; or, to speak more justly, with added honour, from the concurrent and universal testimony of his country to his equity and incorruption ! Oh, would princes so use their power, or so resign it ! Illustrious in the splendor of a throne, and yet more so in the shade of a cell ; so far from envying his successor to the supreme power, that he pitied and prayed for him ! He had raised him by the Divine favour, but could not restore him.

It were hard to determine which was happiest, his life or his death. He lived to the noblest purposes, the glory of God, and the good of his country ; he died full of years and honours, universally lamented and desired. Such was Samuel ! Such always were, and such always will be, in a great measure, all those, whose beginnings are laid in true religion ; whose duty is their delight, and their God their glory !

C H A P. VIII.

David, provoked at the churlishness of Nabal, resolves to destroy him, but is restrained by the wisdom of Abigail, Nabal's wife. Nabal, hearing thereof, dies. David marries Abigail. Saul marches with his army against David, who has the opportunity of taking away his life, but does not think proper to embrace it. David is protected by Achish, king of Gath, who gives him the town of Ziklag for his residence. The Philistines prepare to fight against the Israelites. Saul, previous to his marching against the Philistines, consults the Lord, but not receiving any answer, he applies to the Witch of Endor, whom he intreats to raise the ghost of Samuel. The prophet appears, reproaches the king, and denounces the death of him and his sons on the morrow. The princes of the Philistines request king Achish to dismiss David from their army, which he accordingly does with great commendations of his fidelity. The Amalekites, in David's absence, plunder and burn Ziklag. David pursues, overtakes them, and recovers the spoil. The Israelites are overcome by the Philistines. Saul and his three sons are slain. The Philistines fasten their bodies to the walls of Bethshan. Some valiant men from Jabesh-Gilead carry away the bodies, and bury them near their city. A young man, an Amalekite, brings the news to David of the deaths of Saul and his sons, and that he himself had slain Saul ; upon which David, after rebuking him for having destroyed the Lord's anointed, orders him to be put to death. David's lamentation for the loss of Saul and Jonathan.

DURING the time of lamentation for the death of Samuel, David removed from Engedi, and retired farther into the wilderness of Paran, not far from Maon, where he had once before taken up his residence.

In the neighbourhood of this place lived a person named Nabal, a very wealthy man, but naturally of a rude, fullen, and morose disposition. While David abode in this part of the country before, he had taken great care to restrain his men from doing any injury to Nabal's flocks, and it being now the time of sheep-shearing (which was always a season of great festivity and merriment) he sent messengers to him, requesting that, in consideration of the many civilities he had shewn him, he would be pleased to send him some provisions, for the support of himself and men.

Nabal received the messengers in a very abrupt manner, and, with some opprobrious reflections on David himself, sent them away empty ;

which treatment so exasperated David, that, in the heat of his resentment, he vowed he would destroy all Nabal's family before the next morning.

But David was prevented from executing his rash design by means of Abigail, Nabal's wife, who was a very beautiful woman, and in temper quite the reverse of her husband. It happened that one of Nabal's servants having overheard in what a rough manner his master had dismissed David's servants, immediately went to his mistress, told her all that had passed, and advised her to find out some expedient to secure them against the resentment of David, which must consequently be very great from such treatment ; more especially as it had been often in his power to hurt them, but, on the contrary, he had always been their guardian and protector.

Abigail, who knew her husband's temper too well, thought it would be to no purpose to consult him ; and therefore, of her own accord,

took this expedient to divert David from executing his rash design. She ordered her servants to pack up two hundred loaves of bread, two bottles of wine †, five sheep ready dressed, five measures of parched corn, an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs. With these articles placed on asses Abigail hastened to meet David, who was marching with all speed, accompanied by four hundred of his men (the number being now increased to six hundred, two of which he left behind to take care of the baggage) to put in execution his design against Nabal and his family.

As Abigail was descending one hill, she saw David coming down another opposite, so that they both met in the valley between. As soon as Abigail approached David, she alighted from her ass, and throwing herself prostrate on the ground, besought him to pass over the words of her husband, he being a man whose name was too well adapted to his nature §. She then told him she saw not the messengers that came, begged pardon for what had happened, and desired David to give God thanks for having sent her as the instrument to keep his hands from being stained with innocent blood. She then earnestly requested him to accept the presents she had brought ||, and to forgive the high indignity offered him by her husband.

The feeling manner in which Abigail addressed herself to David so wrought upon him that his indignation instantly subsided *, and he spoke to her as follows: *Blessed*, said he, *be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.* Having said this, David accepted the presents brought him by Abigail; after which they parted with mutual satisfaction: he, for having by her means been prevented from shedding innocent blood, and she, for having thus happily succeeded in her embassy.

When Abigail arrived at her home she found

her husband rioting and drinking, with a number of companions he had invited to an entertainment, and on this account she deferred telling him what had passed till the next morning. Accordingly when he was sober she related to him the whole particulars, upon which, understanding the danger his ill-treatment of David's messengers had exposed him, he was so terrified at the thoughts of it, that his heart died within † him, (that is, he became quite stupid) and in this state he continued for ten days, at the expiration of which, he gave up the ghost.

When David heard of Nabal's death he was greatly rejoiced, and thanked God, not only for having been pleased to inflict such a punishment on him, but likewise, by his Divine interposition, for having, in the person of Abigail, restrained himself from shedding innocent blood. After a proper time had intervened, David, recollecting the beauties of Abigail's person, and her excellent conduct when she came to divert his resentment, sent some of his servants to inform her, that he was desirous of taking her to wife. Abigail, to shew how much she thought herself honoured by this message, bowed herself, and said, *Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.* She then dressed herself in her best attire, and went with the messengers to David, who received her with great courtesy, and immediately made her his wife. Soon after this he married another woman, named Ahionam, a Jezreelite. His first wife Michal had been long from him, her father having given her to one Phalti, the son of Laish, of Gallim.

Some time after this the Zephites (who were professed enemies to David) gave information to Saul of the place where he and his men were concealed; in consequence of which (notwithstanding the solemn promises Saul had made not to do any thing in future to the injury of David) he took 3000 men, and marching with all expedition against him, pitched his tents on the mountain of Hachilah.

David,

† It will at first view appear obvious that what is called two *bottles* of wine could bear no proportion to the other parts of the present, nor answer the exigencies of David's army, if they be understood of such bottles as are now commonly in use with us: But, in these Eastern countries, they used to carry and keep their wine and water in leathern vessels made on purpose to hold liquids, which vessels they called *bottles*. Such were the bottles brought by the Gibeonites to Joshua's camp, which they said were worn out and torn in their pretended long journey. See Josh. ix. 13. And of such as those it is not unlikely Our Saviour speaks, Matth. ix. 17. where, in the marginal note of our old Bible, *bottles* are explained by bags of leather, wherein wine was carried on asses or camels. And that two such vessels as these might hold a quantity of wine proportionable to the rest of the present which Abigail took with her, is not to be disputed.

§ The word Nabal, in the Hebrew language, signifies a *fool* or *madman*.

|| The words Josephus puts into the mouth of Abigail, on this occasion, are to the following effect: "Be pleased, Sir, I beseech you, to accept of the good-will of your poor servant in these small presents, and, upon my humble request, to pass over the offence of my husband, who has so justly incurred your displeasure; for there is nothing so well becoming the character of a person, whom Providence designs for a crown, as clemency and compassion."

* The finest spirits are soonest kindled into a flame; and to see them quickly cooled and calmed again upon the first shew of submission, by the first gleam of conviction, and raging wrath changed in one instant into flowing humanity and

benignity, is the surest test of generosity and true magnanimity. David, convinced by Abigail's prudence of the rashness of his resolution, blesses the Lord God of Israel for sending her, blesses her advice, and blesses her, who kept him from shedding blood, and avenging himself. Can there be a finer picture of a generous mind, of a moderate and humane temper? A celebrated writer observes very justly on this head, that David's resolution against Nabal was the resolution of a mortal, not to say a military man, too much injured and provoked, and urged by necessity and self-preservation. The change, and the thanksgiving, upon being averted from evil, were the sentiments of a hero and a saint.

† It is reasonable to suppose that the natural baseness of Nabal's heart made him think David would not forgive him; and therefore, upon Abigail's representing the case to him, which, no doubt, she did, in lively colours, his terror became irremediable. This extremity of terror we commonly express by the term *thunderstruck*, which is thus finely and feelingly described by Ovid:

So was I stunn'd, as one that's thunderstruck,
Who lives, but lives unconscious of his life.

We have many accounts of men dying through fear of death: but as nothing that we call accidents or natural causes, excludes the interposition of Providence in any event, therefore the Scripture phrase is highly to be admired, which imputes Nabal's death to a stroke from God. *And the Lord smote Nabal that he died.* 1 Sam. xxv. 38.

David, having received intelligence where Saul's army lay encamped, went first privately to reconnoitre it himself. On the evening of the same day he went again, taking with him his cousin Abishai. On their arrival at the camp they found Saul in his tent, with his general Abner, and the guards about him, all fast asleep. Abishai, seeing the king, in this situation, and his spear by him, would willingly have taken advantage of it by dispatching him; but David restrained his hands, telling him, he was God's king, and therefore only accountable to him for his misdeeds. But that he might be afterwards convinced how much he had been again in his power, David said he would take with him his spear, as also the cruse of water, from his bed-side †. Having done this they immediately left the camp, and when David had got at such a distance as to be distinctly heard, he called aloud to Abner, Saul's general, whom he rebuked for his inattention to the king in words to this effect §: "As the Lord liveth, said he, "you deserve to die for thus neglecting the "Lord's anointed. See here the king's spear, "and the cruse of water that was at his bolster!"

Saul, hearing the voice of David, came out of his tent, and called him by his name; upon which David expostulated with him much in the same manner as he did after his escape from the cave, adding this reproach, that by driving him from the inheritance of the Lord, in forcing him to go and converse with the uncircumcised for shelter, he did, in effect, force him to serve other gods. Saul, knowing the great danger he had been in, and that his life was in the hands of the very person he meant to destroy, was so sensible of the goodness of David, that he gave him the most hearty thanks for his life. He accused himself of cruelty, applauded David's generosity, confessed his own guilt, and promised, for the future, never to make any farther attempts on his life.

When Saul had done speaking David desired him to send some person for his spear and the pitcher of water; after which he called upon God to judge between them, and to bear him

witness, that when he took them from Saul's bed-side, he could with as much ease have deprived him of his existence. Thus did a reconciliation once more seem to take place between Saul and David, the former of whom immediately returned home with his army.

David, knowing the instability of Saul's temper, and how morally impossible it was for him to live in safety while he continued in his dominions, determined to go over to the Philistines, thinking that when Saul heard he was not among his own people, he would forbear any farther pursuit after him. Accordingly, having obtained a safe conduct from Achish, king of Gath, he went over with his family, and the six hundred men, to Gath, where he continued some time, during which he was treated by the king with the greatest respect. Not liking his situation, and growing more and more in favour with Achish, he asked him to make him a present of the town of Ziklag || for his residence which the king granted not only to him but also to his heirs.

Soon after David was settled at Ziklag several of Saul's best officers and soldiers came over to him; some of whom were of the tribe of Gad, but most of them of the tribe of Benjamin *. David at first had some suspicion of them, but at length, having made trial of their fidelity, he received them into his service, and gave them commands in his army.

Strengthened with the addition of these men, David, during his stay at Ziklag, made several excursions against the Amalekites, the Geshurites and the Gezrites, from whom he took very considerable booties. He was particularly cautious in destroying the inhabitants of all the places he conquered, lest Achish should receive information from whence he had obtained the plunder. He made great presents to the king, who asked him from whence he had obtained them; to which David replied, from the southerly parts of Judah. This gave great satisfaction to Achish, who imagined, that whilst David abode in his territories, and continued to commit hostilities (as he thought) against his own nation,

† This was a bold and hazardous undertaking, and would have been certain death to David, had he been discovered. But David was bold and intrepid; and his and Abishai's gallantry in this affair, deserves certainly to be no less celebrated than that of Ulysses and Diomed, when they went as spies to the Trojan camp. But there is more in David to be commended than his gallantry. Who can help admiring his magnanimity and piety? What man, but David, with a crown so near in view, would have resisted the fair and inviting temptation? David rejects it with abhorrence, from the principles of religion and duty. Glorious moderation and fortitude of mind! Was ever resolution more generous and loyal? One stroke would have fixed his enemy dead on the spot, put an end to his fears, and mounted him to a throne: and yet, he starts back at the proposal of it: the prospect of a throne will not tempt him to a base, disloyal and cruel action.

§ The speech which David makes to Abner, according to Josephus, is to this effect: "Are not you a fit man to be "a prince's favourite, a general of his army, to take upon "you the guard of his royal person, and under all these honourable obligations, to lie dozing and stretching yourself at your ease, when your master's life is in danger? "Can you tell me what is become of the king's lance, and

"the pitcher of water, that were this night taken by the "enemy out of his tent, and from his very bed-side, and "you, in the mean time, all snoring about him, without "knowing any thing of the matter? Whether this was "neglect or treachery, it is the same thing; and you certainly deserve to lose your head for it."

|| Ziklag was situated in the extreme parts of the tribe of Judah to the south, not far from Hormar, where the Israelites met with a defeat while they sojourned in the wilderness. In the division of the land of Canaan it was first given to the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv. 31. and afterwards to the tribe of Simeon. Josh. xix. 5. But the Philistines seem all along to have kept possession, so that it never came into the hands of either tribe, till, by the gift of Achish, it became the peculiar inheritance of David and his successors. Why David desired of Achish the liberty to retire to this place was, to avoid the envy which the number of his attendants might possibly occasion; to secure his people from the infection of idolatry; to enjoy the free exercise of his own religion; and to gain the opportunity of engaging in something against the enemies of God, without the knowledge or observation of the Philistines.

* The names of those that came over to David at Ziklag are registered in 1 Chron. chap. xii.

nation, he would become his most trusty and faithful servant †.

A lucky circumstance now occurred which prevented Achish from discovering (as he otherwise might have done) that the depredations, committed by David, and the booty obtained, was on, and from, his enemies, instead (as Achish thought) of his friends. The Philistines resolved on leading an army against the Israelites, for which purpose they dispatched messengers to all their allies and auxiliaries, ordering them to prepare themselves for battle, and to assemble forthwith at Shunem, the place designed for the general meeting of the army. In consequence of this resolution, Achish acquainted David with his intentions of taking him and his men with him, to give their assistance in opposing the Israelites. David was forced to comply, though no doubt it was contrary to his inclinations to think of fighting against his own people. It would, however, certainly have been highly dishonourable and ungrateful to have refused the request of Achish, after having been treated by him in so friendly and courteous a manner. David, therefore, joined the army of the Philistines, who, agreeable to the orders given, marched and encamped at Shunem.

Saul, having received intelligence that the Philistines were advanced as far as Shunem, and had encamped on the plains there, marched with his army against them, and pitched his tents near the mountains of Gilboa, directly opposite the camp of the enemy. Having here a full view of the army of the Philistines, and finding them much more numerous, and in better condition than his own, Saul began to despair of success; but his spirits quite misgave him, when he found, on asking the Lord in what manner he should act, that it did not please him to give him any answer.

Some time before this Saul had banished all diviners, and such as dealt with familiar spirits, out of the principal cities of his dominions; but being now in the utmost perplexity he was resolved to consult some person of that profession, in order to know what would be the issue of the war. At a place called Endor, about three leagues from Mount Gilboa, he was told

there lived a witch, or sorceress; upon which, disguising himself and taking but two servants with him to avoid suspicion, he went to the woman by night, and desired her skill in calling up the ghost of such a person as he should name. The woman at first refused, telling him (in consequence of the prohibition against practising the art of necromancy) that if it was known she should be infallibly ruined. But Saul assuring her, with the most serious imprecations, that no mortal should ever know a syllable that passed between them, she at length consented, asking him, Whom she should raise up? He desired her to raise up the ghost of Samuel; upon which, after using her accustomed incantations, a phantom immediately appeared. From this spectre the woman learnt that it was Saul who had employed her; and Saul, when he saw it, was so struck with amazement, knowing it to be the figure of Samuel, that he bowed his face to the ground. The apparition spoke first, and demanded of Saul the reason why he had raised him from the dead? Saul told him that the Philistines, with a powerful army, had invaded his territories, and that in his distress God had forsaken him, and would give no answer whatever way he consulted him ‡. The spirit answered, that, for his disobedience, in not destroying the Amalekites, God had taken away the kingdom from his family, and given it to David; and that, as to the fate of the war, the Philistines, the next day, should rout his army, and he and his sons fall in the battle.

Saul was so affected at this information, that his spirits left him, he fainted, and fell on the ground. He was, indeed, at this time, exceeding weak in body, not having taken any refreshment for a considerable time. When he had a little recovered himself the woman entreated him to take some kind of sustenance, telling him, at the same time, that she desired no other reward for the danger to which she had exposed herself, than the opportunity of enabling him to return to his army. After many importunities, Saul was at length prevailed on to accept the woman's offer; upon which she immediately killed a young calf, and having properly prepared a part of it, set it before Saul and his attendants, who, after eating thereof, took leave of

† The conduct of David in these particulars, has been condemned by minute critics, as a piece of ingratitude, and a breach of the principles of hospitality: but as the charge is founded upon a supposition that the nations invaded were Philistines, and the confederates of Achish, it will be found to be groundless if we attend to what follows. It afterwards appeared that these clans were not confederates with Achish, but in a state of hostility with him; particularly the Amalekites, whom we find soon after making great depredations upon the Philistine territories; 1 Sam. chap. xxx. 16. and that therefore David did not act in the least dishonourably by him, but in reality for his service, in the attack he made on them. Besides that, the Amalekites were many ages before doomed to destruction; and the Geshurites and Gezrites, the old inhabitants of the land, and the Canaanites, as appears from Josh. xii. 5. xvi. 3. were commanded to be extirpated by God himself, for such reasons as render such a command worthy his character. It is farther to be remarked, that as those people were on the south of Judah, they made frequent incursions into the land, and were the avowed enemies of the Hebrews. This is certain, at least, of the Ama-

lekites, of whom frequent mention is made in the books of the Old Testament, as engaged in many expeditions to plunder the country, and destroy the inhabitants. David therefore had a right to cut off those nations; as deserving the character of a man after God's own heart, he was called upon to do it, and in doing it he served his country, without injuring his protector and friend.

‡ The sacred historian has reckoned up three several ways of enquiring of God, viz. by Dreams, by Urim, and by Prophets; and it may not be amiss to observe, that the Gentiles had the like kind of methods in consulting their gods, as appears from what Achilles says in the council of the Greeks when met together to consider of the plague sent among them by Apollo:

But let some prophet, or some sacred sage,
Explore the cause of great Apollo's rage;
Or learn the wasteful vengeance to remove
By mystic dreams, for dreams descend from Jove.

Poës.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



*The APPARITION of SAMUEL raised by the WITCH of ENDOR
at the request of King Saul.*

of the woman, and returned that night to the camp §.

The next morning the two armies shifted their encampments, the Philistines removing to Aphek, and the Israelites to Jezreel. Some of the Philistine princes observing there were many Hebrews with Achish, king of Gath, asked him who they were, from whence they came, and who brought them thither? Achish told them the young man (pointing to David) who commanded them was one of Saul's servants, but that having, on some occasion or other, incurred his displeasure, he was obliged to have recourse to flight: that he had been, for some time, with him, during which he had behaved himself in such a manner, as fully convinced him that he was a man of the strictest integrity.

When the Philistines knew who David was, they strongly objected against accepting his assistance, saying, it was certainly dangerous to place the least confidence in a person whom they knew belonged to their professed enemies. They therefore insisted that he should be dismissed, upon which Achish, calling David aside, told him the desire of the people, at the same time giving him high commendations for his conduct: *Surely, said he, as the Lord liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out, and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless, the lords favour thee not. Wherefore, now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines.* These orders were far from being disagreeable

to David, who immediately left the camp, and departed, with his men, for Ziklag.

David, in the course of his march, was joined by several considerable people belonging to the tribe of Manasseh ||. This, indeed, was a favourable circumstance, for, when he arrived at Ziklag he found the Amalekites* had, during his absence, pillaged and burnt the place, carried away his two wives, and all the inhabitants. What added to this misfortune was, the soldiers accused him of being the occasion of it, and even went so far as to threaten to stone him.

In consequence of this disaster, David desired Abiathar the priest to bring him the ephod, which being done, he consulted the Lord, whether or not it was proper for him to pursue the Amalekites. He was answered in the affirmative, and farther told, that he should *surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.* Encouraged by this intelligence David, leaving two hundred of his men to take care of the baggage, immediately marched with the rest in pursuit of the enemy. Having gained intelligence which way they took he soon came up with them, and found them so intoxicated in consequence of the spoil they had taken, as to be almost senseless, and consequently not apprehensive of any danger. David took advantage of this favourable opportunity, and immediately falling on them, put the greater part to the sword, only four hundred, who were mounted on camels, saving themselves by flight †. He then gathered together the people whom they had made captives, and, with the spoils which they had not only taken from him, but likewise from others ‡ in their expedition,

§ Josephus, in describing the interview between Saul and the witch of Endor, has given some commendations to each for their conduct. With respect to the woman, he says, "It is but justice due to this poor woman that we should here take some notice of her distinguished liberality towards Saul. She had been greatly injured by the king, in being restrained from the practice of that art whereby she comfortably maintained herself and family. He came to her as a mere stranger, and requested her advice by methods himself had prohibited; when, notwithstanding the danger she was in, she complied with his request. She likewise treated him in the most hospitable manner her circumstances would permit, and all this without the least expectation of any future reward, for she knew that Saul was on the point of losing both his kingdom and life. Such generous conduct finely displays to us the honour and humanity of relieving the distressed; and we may be assured that a sincere and unaffected charity is a virtue, of all others, the most acceptable in the sight of God."

"Some encomiums are likewise due to Saul on this occasion. He was certain he should die in the combat, having been told so by the prophet; notwithstanding which he was determined to submit to his fate, and not endeavour to save himself at the expence of his people. He esteemed it a glory to die fighting for the defence of his government, and rather to have his sons, and his whole family, share with him in the conflict, than be left at the disposal of the person who should succeed him. Such conduct dignifies the man and the prince, and ought to be an example to all elevated characters. The man who hazards his life in the common course of war acts between hope and fear, and, by favourable circumstances, may escape; but the great soul is placed in him, who, when he knows he must unavoidably perish, boldly meets his destruction, and encounters his fate, without the least hope of being able to avoid it. This character is justly due to Saul, and his conduct should be an example to all future princes, in whom either a mediocrity of courage or virtue is a kind of reproach."

|| See 1 Chron. chap. xii.

* These Amalekites appear to have been clans of straggling free-booters, who rambled from place to place, and, like the Arabians, were common enemies to mankind. It may seem strange that David, having killed all he could meet with in one of his excursions against them whilst at Ziklag, they should not have served his people in the same manner. But, though they fought revenge, yet they gave the preference to booty. Being a poor and covetous people, they spared not the men and women from compassion, but avarice, because they wanted slaves either for their own use, or to sell to others. The gracious interposition of Providence is very conspicuous in this event; for, doubtless, it is most extraordinary that the captives should have been thus spared, to be recovered afterwards safe and unhurt out of the hands of a people so abandoned and execrable as the Amalekites.

† The number of Amalekites that fled were equal to all David's forces; and out of self-preservation he was obliged to put as many of them to the sword as he could, to prevent being surrounded and destroyed by so superior a number. A partial victory, instead of being any service to him, would have rather turned out to his disadvantage; because the straggling parties might have united, and watched an opportunity of retrieving their defeat by a second attack. Besides, it was not unknown to David, nor can it be unknown to every attentive reader, that the Amalekites were such inveterate enemies to the Israelites, and so restless at the same time, that they would have lost no opportunity of wiping off their disgrace, or endangering the very being of the Israelitish nation. It is to be observed, lastly, that David, in this case, not only acted with great prudence, in pursuing his victory, and endeavouring to extirpate the Amalekites, but also manifested his duty to God, who had condemned them to be utterly cut off.

‡ David and his men, to crown their success, not only recovered their wives and children, and every thing they had lost, but all the plunder which the enemy had taken elsewhere. They obtained prodigious flocks and herds of cattle, which they separated from their own, and, in honour of their leader, distinguished by the name of *David's spoil*; and of this spoil, when David returned to Ziklag, he sent presents,

pedition, returned in triumph to Ziklag.

The issue of this battle occasioned a dispute between the soldiers who were left as guards over the baggage, and those who attended David, the latter not agreeing to allow any part of the booty to the former, except their wives and children. After some altercation the dispute was settled by David, who told them the victory was God's, and being a blessing on the common cause, it was but reasonable that the whole body should partake of the benefit, for that those who guarded the camp and baggage did equally their duty, and were in as great a degree serviceable, as those who attended in the field. From this circumstance David established it as a law (which was ever after kept in force) that whatever plunder should be obtained in war, an equal division should be made, as well among those who were ordered to guard the camp, as those who were present in the battle.

During these transactions a desperate engagement took place between the Philistines and the Israelites. The former were so powerful that the latter were obliged to give way, and they maintained a running fight till they came to Mount Gilboa, where, taking advantage of the ground, they attempted again to rally, but with as little success as before. Saul and his sons did all that was possible for brave men to do; but the Philistines aiming principally at them, in a short time overpowered them, so that Jonathan, with two of his brothers, Abinadab and Malchishua, were killed on the spot, and the whole army thrown into the greatest confusion.

Saul defended himself, for a time, with the most unparalleled resolution; but the small party that remained with him being at length entirely broken, and the enemies archers pressing hard, he found himself so weakened from the wounds he had received, and the loss of blood, that, to prevent falling into the hands of the Philistines, and being insulted by them, he begged his armour-bearer to dispatch him. The man refused to do the office, upon which Saul, fixing the point of his sword to his breast, and leaning on it with all his force, it pierced through him, he fell on the ground, and instantly gave up the ghost §.

When the armour-bearer saw his master dead, he desperately followed his example, and, in the same manner, put a period to his existence. There was not a single man of the king's guards that escaped the fury of the Philistines, all, without distinction, being put to the sword.

No sooner did the Hebrews who resided in the valley, as well as those in the plains on the other side of Jordan, hear of the deaths of Saul and his sons, with the destruction of his army, than they immediately withdrew themselves to fastnesses and strong holds; while the Philistines

quietly made themselves masters of the places they had quitted.

Early the next morning the Philistines went into the field of battle to take a view of the general carnage, when finding the bodies of Saul and his sons among the slain, they stripped them of their armour, cut off their heads, and sent messengers to the most principal places, to inform the people of the victory they had obtained over the Israelites. They sent Saul's armour to the temple of their idol Ashtaroath, and, as the last indignity they could offer, hung the bodies of him and his sons on the walls of Bethshan, a city belonging to the tribe of Manasseh.

This barbarous outrage, committed on the bodies of Saul and his sons, coming to the ears of the people of Jabesh-Gilead (who retained a grateful sense of the services Saul had done them in rescuing them out of the hands of the cruel king Nahash) some of the most daring and enterprising among them made up a party, and going to Bethshan took down their bodies and brought them to Jabesh, where they first burnt their flesh, and afterwards honourably interred their bones and ashes near the city. The people, on this occasion, fasted for seven days, during which they continued to express their grief by the most distinguished lamentations.

Such was the end of Saul, according to the prophecy of Samuel, for having disobeyed the commands of God in not destroying the race of the Amalekites, and for putting Ahimelech, together with all his priests, to the sword. He ruled forty years, eighteen of which were during the life of Samuel, and twenty-two after his decease.

It appears from circumstances that the battle fought between the army of the Philistines, and that of the Israelites, happened on the same day that David returned to Ziklag, after defeating the Amalekites. Be that as it may, however, David did not hear of it till the morning of the third day after his arrival at Ziklag, when a young man, an Amalekite, came thither, with his clothes rent, and ashes on his head, and threw himself prostrate on the ground before David. Being asked from whence he came, and why he appeared so mournful, he replied in words to this effect: That he was an Amalekite, and came to inform him of the event of the battle between the Hebrews and the Philistines. That the king and his sons were slain, and the greatest part of the army shared the same fate. He farther told David, that what he said might be depended on, for that he was a spectator of the whole scene. That he stood by Saul when he attempted to stab himself, but not having strength enough, from the many wounds he had received, to force the point of the sword through his body after he had for some time leant upon it,

§ Thus was the prediction of Samuel strictly fulfilled. But who can avoid dropping a tear over the faithful, the amiable Jonathan. There are few characters among men more lovely or more extraordinary. He was possessed of fortitude, fidelity and magnanimity. He had a soul susceptible of the most refined friendship, and superior to all the temptations of ambition and vanity: and all these good qualities were crowned with the most resigned submission to the will of God.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



*The PHILISTINES offering up the Armour, &c.
of Saul to their Idol ASHTAROTH.*

The **PHILISTINES** *cutting off the* **HEADS** *of* **SAUL** *and his*
three **SONS**, *after having de-* *feated the Army of the Israelites, near*
— MOUNT GILBOA. —



Engraved for **Wimington** *History of the Bible.*

it, he begged him to finish what himself was unable to perform, and that he readily obeyed the royal command. To confirm what he had said, he produced the golden bracelets and crown of Saul, and told David he took them away after he was dead, with no other design than to make a present of them to him ||.

David, believing what the young Amalekite had said was true relative to the death of Saul and his sons, with the destruction of the army of the Israelites, rent his clothes, and, with his people, spent the whole day in fasting and lamentation. He was particularly afflicted for the loss of Jonathan, who had more than once been the preserver of his life. And such respect did he still shew to the memory of Saul, notwithstanding the repeated attempts he had made to take away his life, that, instead of rewarding the young Amalekite for the presents he brought, he ordered him to be put to death, not only as an enemy, but a professed regicide*.

David was so afflicted at the death of Saul and Jonathan, that he composed, an ode, or elegy, on the melancholy occasion. This elegy has ever been admired as a picture of distress the most tender and the most striking; unequally divided, by grief, into longer and shorter breaks, as nature could pour them forth from a mind much interrupted, and filled with the most lively images of love and greatness. The whole of this elegy is contained in the first chapter of the Second Book of Samuel; and may be thus paraphrased:

Thy Glory, Israel! and thy beauty mourn!
'Tis vanish'd, never, never to return.
Ah! who in feeble mortal's strength wou'd
trust?

Whose glory is so near ally'd to dust!

O tell it not in Gath's triumphant gate,
Nor in the streets of Ascalon relate;
Lest the proud daughters of a race profane,
In festive songs insult our heroes slain.

O fatal Gilboa, where my friend was slain;
No dew on thee descend, or kindly rain:
No corn or wine thy fatal surface yield,
For there was lost the warrior's mighty shield;
The shield of Saul was lost; his sacred head,
(Tho' the bless'd oil around his temples shed)
Prophan'd and mingled with the vulgar dead!

|| From the account we have of Saul's death, viz. that he fell upon his own sword, and expired (1 Sam. xxxi. 4.) it appears evident that the whole story of this Amalekite was a fiction of his own inventing, on purpose to ingratiate himself with David, the presumptive successor to the throne of Israel. But then it may be asked how he came by Saul's crown and bracelet? It is incongruous to think he would wear them in the time of the action, since that would have exposed him to the archers of the Philistines. In answer to this it may be said, that they were carried to the battle by some of his servants, probably for him to have put on, in case he had obtained the victory, and returned in triumph; but the Israelites being defeated, and Saul himself slain, they fell, by some accident, into the hands of this Amalekite.

* This self-convicted wretch intended to make a merit of his falsehood: but he knew not David; he knew not that a crown would be unwelcome to him, at the price of treason;

Thy bow, my friend, was seldom drawn in vain,

Thy arrows drank the blood of thousands slain.

What armies fell by Saul's victorious sword,
Too faithful now to its despairing lord!

Princely his stature, charming was his air;

With him alone could Jonathan compare:

Lovely in life, in death too near ally'd,

Not death itself their friendship cou'd divide:

Swifter than eagles cut their airy way,

Stronger than lions when they seize their prey.

Mourn all ye loves! Ye tender virgins mourn!

Your flow'ry wreaths to Cypress garlands turn:

Mourn your lov'd monarch's lamentable fate,

On whom so oft your charming choir did wait,

As he from fight return'd in kingly state:

For you he conquer'd; you did with him share

The wealth of peace, and glorious spoils of war:

Lay by your purple robes from Sidon's shore,
And wear your splendid coronets no more;

For Saul, who gave them, generous Saul is lost,

And silent shades receive his mighty ghost.

How are the mighty fall'n! their strength is vain!

O Jonathan! thou wert in battle slain!

Stretch'd on cold earth, thy lifeless limbs as cold,

Nor those dear eyes must I again behold.

O Jonathan! how shall I thee commend!

My more than brother, and my more than friend!

My life, my Jonathan! And can we part?

I feel thy loss hang heavy on my heart.

With mortal anguish is my soul oppress'd,

I wear thy bleeding image in my breast.

Thy friendship did the tend'rest love excel;

'Twas like thyself, 'twas all a miracle:

A pure, a constant, and a heav'nly fire,

Beyond the softer sex's frail desire.

How are the mighty fall'n! their fate deplore!

Thy sword and shield, O Israel, are no more.

and that the throne would not tempt him, if to be purchased by parricide. He, who himself thrice spared Saul, when he had him absolutely in his power, could he forbear punishing the man who boasted of having murdered him? no: he justly ordered his immediate execution for having slain the Lord's anointed. It is true he died for a crime which he had not committed; yet well deserved to die for taking the guilt of it upon him: thus doubly devoted to destruction. David rightly judged that Saul had no power over his own life, and consequently should not have been obeyed in such a command. God and the state had as much right to his life, when he was weary of it, as when he most loved it; and further, it behoved David to vindicate his innocence to the world by so public an execution, otherwise, perhaps, he might have been branded with the guilt of employing that wretch to murder his persecutor.

C H A P. IX.

David is anointed king in Hebron by the tribe of Judah. Is opposed by Abner, the late king's general, who proclaims Ishbosheth, the only remaining son of Saul, successor to the throne. Abner marches against the army of David, and is defeated by Joab, his general. He goes over to David, and is treacherously murdered by Joab. David laments his death, and pays the greatest respect to his funeral obsequies. The death of Ishbosheth. David is recognized king by all the tribes. He raises an army against the Jebusites, whom he defeats, and takes Jerusalem. Engages the Philistines, and defeats them. Removes the Ark from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem. Dances and sings before it, for which he is ridiculed by his wife Michal.

WHEN David had performed his last duties to the memory of Saul and his sons, and the time of mourning was expired, he consulted God which of the cities of Judah should be allotted for his habitation. Though he knew himself appointed to the kingdom, yet he would not presume to take upon him the administration of affairs without first making this application, in order to know when and by what means he should best be put in possession of the kingdom he was to govern.

The Almighty was pleased to order David to go up to the city of Hebron †, upon which he immediately left Ziklag, and removed thither with his family and forces; soon after which the princes of Judah came to Hebron to congratulate him on his return to his native country, and, in a full assembly convened for the purpose, anointed him their king.

By this time David had been informed of the generous conduct of the people of Jabesh-Gilead, in rescuing the bodies of Saul and his sons from the Philistines, and giving them honourable interment. He was so pleased with this information, that he sent messengers to thank them for what they had done, and to assure them that they might ever depend on his favour and protection. He likewise desired the messengers to inform them that he had been chosen, by the tribe of Judah, as successor to the sovereignty.

While the princes of Judah were interesting themselves in behalf of David, Abner, the late king's uncle, and general of the army, set up Ishbosheth the only remaining son of Saul, as successor to the throne. He appointed Mahanaim ‡, on the other side the river Jordan, as the place of his residence; and by his great in-

terest and authority Ishbosheth § was declared king by all the tribes except that of Judah.

Abner was so incensed against the tribe of Judah for having chose David their king, that, after some time, he determined to make war against them, and accordingly dispatched a body of the best men he could select from his whole army for that purpose. In the mean time Joab (the general of David's forces) hearing that Abner was on his way towards Hebron, marched with his army against him, taking with him his two brothers Abishai and Asahel.

When the two armies came near each other, (which was not far from Gibeon) and were drawn up in order of battle, Abner proposed, that the contest should be determined between twenty-four men, twelve to be chosen out of each army. This proposition being agreed to, the men were selected and engaged, when their skill was so great on both sides, that every man killed his antagonist; so that the whole twenty-four lay dead on the spot. In consequence of this a general engagement commenced between the two armies, which, for some time, was exceeding desperate on both sides; but at length Abner's army was totally routed, and put to flight. Joab and his two brothers pursued the fugitives, and Asahel (the younger brother of Joab) being much more active than the rest, got greatly ahead, and made the best of his way after Abner. As soon as he came up with him, Abner, who knew him, he begged he would desist, and not attempt to attack him, as he should be very unwilling, by defending himself, to deprive him of his existence. Asahel paid no attention to this remonstrance, but, ambitious of taking a general prisoner, made a stroke at Abner, who, with his spear,

† The city of Hebron stood in the midst of the tribe of Judah; and being the metropolis of the whole tribe, it was very commodious for David's residence at this juncture; for he could not be insensible that the determination of the metropolis in his favour would be of the greatest weight to influence the whole tribe.

‡ Mahanaim was a place belonging to the tribe of Gad, and had its name from the appearance of an host of angels to Jacob, as he went with his family from Padan-aram, Gen. xxxii. 1. The reasons why Abner retreated thither in the beginning of Ishbosheth's reign were, that he might secure the people on that side the Jordan especially the gallant inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, who were firmly attached to the house of Saul; and, chiefly, that he might be at a greater distance from David, have the new king more absolutely un-

der his command, and a better opportunity of recruiting his army among a people, who were not only very courageous by nature, but likewise well affected to the cause he had espoused.

§ Ishbosheth was forty years of age at the time he was elected king. He reigned (properly speaking) only two years, though seven years and a half elapsed before David (who resided all the time at Hebron) was made king by the general voice of the people. As Ishbosheth was a very weak and inactive prince, when the war broke out with Judah, Abner took the government upon himself; so that the other five years and a half which passed before David ascended to the throne of Israel is not reckoned as part of Ishbosheth's reign, because he was only a nominal king, not having the least authority.

spear, gave him a wound, of which he immediately expired.

A very short time after this the victorious army arrived at the spot where the body of Affahel lay, on beholding of which they were so shocked, that they immediately ceased the pursuit. Abner availed himself of this opportunity to rally his scattered forces, and making a stand on an advanced ground where he could not be attacked, he sounded a parley, and calling aloud to Joab, addressed him in words to the following effect: "This outrageous animosity, said he, has already gone too far among people of the same blood and profession. As for your brother Affahel, I begged him to desist, but he was so obstinate, that I was reduced to the necessity of taking away his life for the security of my own; so that his death was owing to his own misconduct."

Joab could not but admit the justness of Abner's argument, upon which he sounded a retreat, and the armies separated. Abner immediately marched with his men to Mahanaim; but Joab encamped on the spot that night. The next morning he returned to the place of battle to take a view of the slain, when he found, upon computation, that Abner had lost 360 men, and himself nineteen, exclusive of Affahel. Joab and Abishai carried the remains of their deceased brother to Bethlehem, and there interred them in the sepulchre of their ancestors. Having done this, they set out with their army for Hebron, and travelling all night, arrived there early the next morning.

From this period (which was about two years after the death of Saul) a civil war continued between the families of Saul and David for upwards of five years, during which time the forces of the latter, in most encounters had the advantage, and the interest of David visibly increased in the nation, as that of Ishbosheth declined.

During the time David resided at Hebron he had six sons born of as many wives; namely, Amnon, the son of Ahinoam; Chileah, the son of Abigail; Absalom, the son of Maachah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; Adonijah, the son of Haggith; Sheppatiah, the son of Abital; and Ithream, the son of Eglah.

For some time after the commencement of the civil war between David and Ishbosheth, Abner was the grand support of the latter, and it was by his prudence and interest that the people were kept in obedience; but a circumstance at length occurred which produced a fatal disunion to both parties. Abner had, for some time, preserved a familiar intimacy with Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, one of Saul's concubines. Intimation of this coming to the ears of Ishbosheth, he rebuked Abner for his conduct, who, thinking himself treated with indignity, vowed no less a revenge than converting his interest from Ishbosheth to David. *Am I,* said he, *a dog's head, which against Judah do shew kindness*

this day unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to-day with a fault against this woman? As the Lord hath sworn unto David, even so do I unto him; to translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel, and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba ||.

Abner, fired with resentment, and unable to govern his passions, immediately set about putting his threats into execution. He sent messengers to Hebron, giving them full power to form a league of friendship with David, and to assure him that he would use all the endeavours he was able to promote his interest.

David treated the messengers of Abner with great respect, and agreed to form a covenant with their master on condition that he delivered up to him his wife Michal, who had been forcibly taken from him by Saul, and given to another.

When the messengers returned to Abner, and informed him of the condition David had stipulated, he sent to Phaltiel (to whom Michal had been given in marriage by Saul) demanding him to deliver up his wife, she being the property of another person. Phaltiel (knowing the great power of Abner) was forced to comply, upon which Michal was immediately conducted to Hebron. Phaltiel was so affected at the loss of his wife, that he followed her a great part of the way, and expressed his grief on the occasion by the greatest lamentations.

The request of David being thus complied with, Abner prosecuted his intentions against Ishbosheth with the greatest vigour. He summoned together an assembly of the elders and principal people, both civil and military, at Mahanaim, who being met, he addressed them in words to this effect: "There was a time, says he, when ye would have willingly renounced your allegiance to Ishbosheth, and gone over to David: I was then against it, but ye are now at liberty to use your own discretion. I am fully convinced that, as God, by the prophet Samuel, hath anointed and constituted David king over all the Hebrews, and hath foretold that he shall be the scourge of the Philistines and shall subdue and bring them under his obedience, so shall he actually obtain the sovereignty over all Israel." When the elders and officers of the army found the sentiments of Abner corresponded with those they had themselves entertained, they unanimously agreed with him in opinion, and from that time acted openly in favour of David.

Abner, having thus far proved successful, summoned together the tribe of Benjamin, (which included the guards of Ishbosheth) to whom he addressed himself in much the same manner he had done to the people of Mahanaim. These likewise he found condescending, and ready to favour his design; upon which, selecting twenty

|| We have here an instance what a strange alteration the study of revenge will produce in the human breast. Abner, before he was instigated by this destructive passion, was indefatigable in endeavouring to support the crown he had placed on the head of Ishbosheth; he visited every part of the coun-

try, in order to confirm the attachment of the Israelites to the house of Saul: but now, he not only threatens to desert himself, but, at the same time, to carry over all the troops his interest could procure to the opposite party.

twenty of the most distinguished, he took them with him, and went to David, in order to ratify the treaty that had been agreed on between them. David received Abner and his company with the greatest respect, and entertained them, for some days, in the most sumptuous manner; at the expiration of which Abner desired to be dismissed for the present, that he might go and bring the army and people to Hebron, in order to make good what he had undertaken, by publickly delivering up the government into his hands.

A very short time after Abner had left Hebron, Joab, (David's general) returned from an expedition against the Philistines, in which he had been successful, and taken abundance of spoil. Being informed that Abner had been there, and how kindly the king had received him, he was immediately struck with an outrageous fit of jealousy, thinking, no doubt, from the great abilities of Abner, he would infallibly supplant him in his master's esteem. In consequence of this he immediately went to David, and expostulated with him on the impropriety of his conduct in listening to any terms proposed by Abner, who, he said, was to be considered in no other light than a spy, and whom he knew to be the protector and supporter of his professed enemy. That what he had done was all a deception, and that he was probably gone home to take advantage of his ill-judged credulity.

David, not seeming to countenance the observations made by Joab, the latter, determined to seek revenge on Abner by some means or other, formed the resolution of effectually obtaining his wishes by taking away his life. He accordingly dispatched messengers after Abner, in the name of David, requesting his immediate return, as some things were omitted in his instructions that were exceeding important. The messengers overtook Abner at a place called Sirah, and communicating their business, he immediately returned. In the mean time Joab, taking with him his sword, and accompanied by his brother Abishai, planted himself in a private place without the gates of the city; and when Abner came to the spot he called him aside, telling him he had some business to relate to him of a private nature. Abner, not suspecting any danger, readily retired with Joab, when the lat-

ter, suddenly drawing his sword, stabbed him to the heart. — Thus was the brave Abner taken off by the perfidy of Joab, who pretended he did it in revenge for the death of his brother Affahel; but, in reality, it was certainly to gratify his jealousy and revenge, for fear of being supplanted in the king's favour.

When David was informed of Abner's death, he was so affected that, for some time, he knew not how to contain himself. He solemnly declared, in the presence of all about him, that he was neither accessory to the murder, nor knew any thing of so horrid an act being intended. He denounced the most heavy curses on Joab and his family, wishing they might receive that punishment due to so enormous a crime. He ordered all the people to march before the bier of Abner, and with tears and lamentations, with their clothes rent, and putting on of sackcloth (as the custom then was) to bewail his loss, and to perform all funeral rites to him in the most solemn manner. He attended himself as chief mourner, and the example he set in expressing his lamentation for the loss of Abner, was followed by the whole body of people*. In short, so affected was David at this melancholy circumstance, that, notwithstanding the most pressing persuasions of his friends, he could not be prevailed upon to take the least refreshment that day, swearing, he would not take any thing till the sun was gone down. The severity of this religious strictness gained David the universal affection of the people, who were sufficiently satisfied that he was not only a total stranger to the murder of Abner, but, on the contrary, held him in the highest esteem.

When the funeral ceremonies were over, David addressed the multitude, in a very pathetic harangue, in which he first pointed out to them his own particular unhappiness in being deprived of a friend for whom he had so great a value; and then told them, that his loss must be sensibly felt by the whole nation, since he was not only a brave foldier, but a wise and prudent counsellor. He concluded by wishing that the person, who had committed the horrid deed might be punished as he deserved. *The Lord*, said he, *shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness*†.

When

* David composed an ode or elegy on this melancholy occasion, which every reader will discern to be truly poetic in the most literal translation. It is contained in the 33d and 34th verses of the third chapter of the second book of Samuel, and the sense of it, together with its measure, may be thus expressed:

As dies the criminal, shall Abner die?
Thy hands not bound,
Nor to the fetters were thy feet applied:
As is their feet that fall
Before the faces of the sons of guilt,
So art thou fallen.

For he was killed as a traitor; but, had he been really so, he should have died in chains and fetters, after a fair trial. Josephus says, that David interred Abner magnificently, and that he wrote funeral lamentations to his honour; i. e. as some suppose, he raised a magnificent tomb for him, and engraved upon it an epitaph in his praise.

† A very celebrated writer has made the following observations on the conduct of David on this occasion, as also that of Abner, whose fate he thinks not so much to be de-

plored as it may seem to deserve from the circumstances attending his death. "The whole behaviour of David (says he) on this occasion gave great satisfaction to the people, as did, indeed, every part of his conduct. *Whatever the king did pleased all the people.* Rare felicity of princes! Or, shall we add, felicity peculiar to David. The fall of a man like Abner must inspire every mind with grave and serious reflections: *A great man fallen!* and fallen by so unexpected and surprizing a treachery! at the very time of his returning to his duty; and in the eye of a great revolution, seemingly depending upon his fate! — True — but then this great man sported with the lives of his brethren; and perhaps deliberately opposed himself to the dictates of his known duty to God, for a series of years. He spilled the first blood shed in this civil war; and, it may be, all that was shed: at least we hear of none, after the battle of *Gibson*. This is evident, David declined all occasion of combat with his adversaries: we hear of him no where out of Hebron, during the whole course of this long civil war. This surely may be numbered among his felicities, never to have drawn his sword upon a subject in a contest of seven (and a war of five) years continuance. It is true Abner was now returned to his duty; but



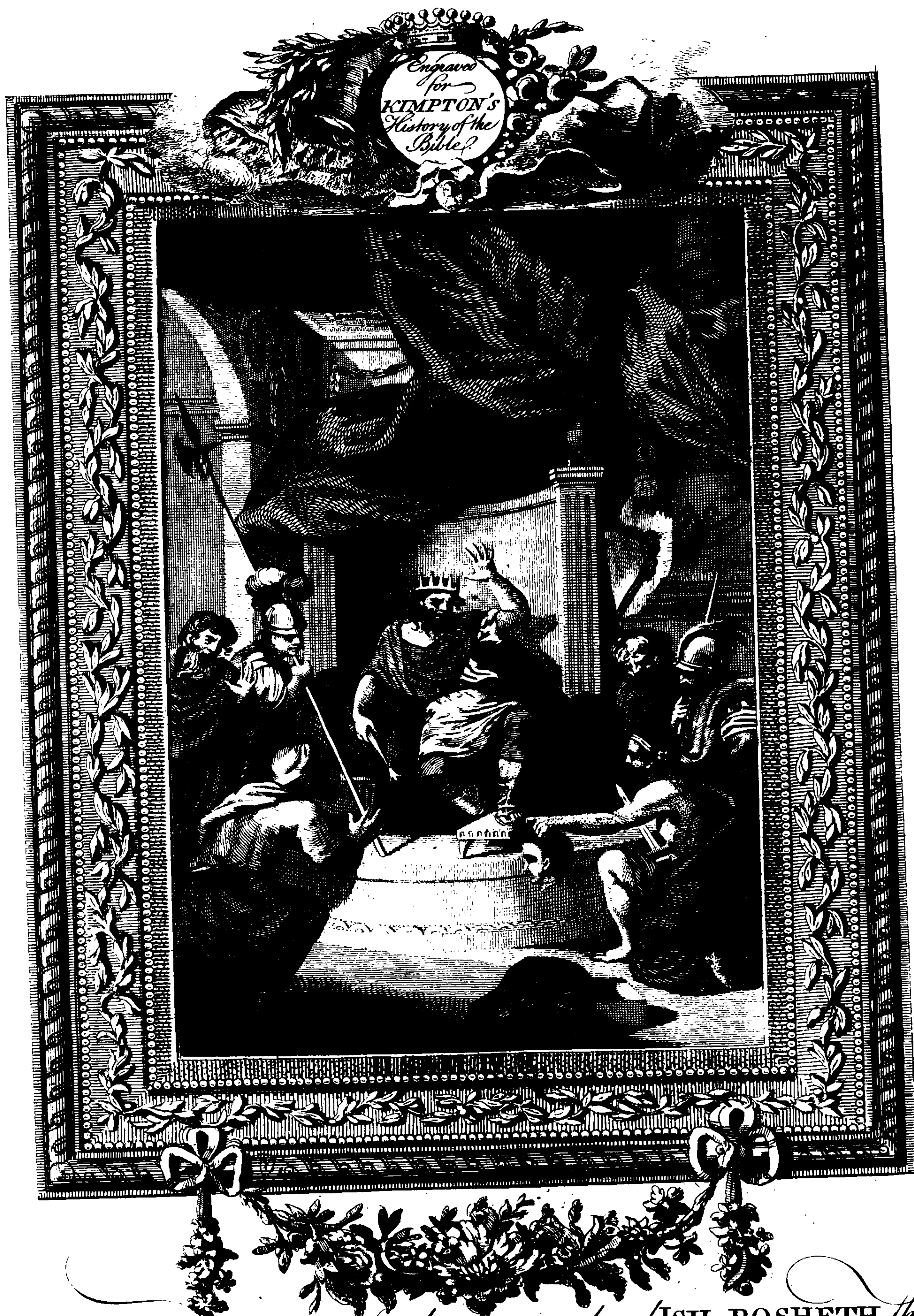
BAANAH and RACHAB after having murdered ISH-BOSHETH the son of Saul, presenting his Head to King David at Hebron?

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible:



II SAM. III. 27.

ABNER, Saul's General, ASSASSINATED without the Gate of the City of HEBRON, by JOAB, General of King David's Forces. —



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When Ishbosheth heard of the death of Abner he was greatly afflicted in his mind, not only on account of having lost a relation, but the person who had been the means of advancing him to the throne. He did not, however long survive Abner, being, soon after his death, treacherously murdered by Baanah and Rechab, two of the principal officers of the army. These persons being Benjamites and of the first rank, thought if they put Ishbosheth to death, it would be well received by David, who they flattered themselves would, for their conduct, advance them to some honourable employment. Having resolved on carrying their design into execution, they went to that apartment of the palace where Ishbosheth was accustomed to repose himself during the heat of the day. There being no guards about the place, and the servant appointed to watch the door absent, they stole into the chamber, where, finding Ishbosheth alone, and fast asleep, they first stabbed him, and then, cutting off his head, hastened with all expedition to Hebron, in order to present it, as fresh as possible, to David. They made not the least doubt of being amply rewarded for this singular achievement; but they soon found themselves mistaken, for when they presented the head to David, he was so far from approving of what they had done, that he rebuked them in the most severe terms †, and afterwards gave orders that their hands and feet should be cut off, and their bodies hung up in a public place, as a terror to all regicides. David caused the head of Ishbosheth to be honourably interred in Abner's sepulchre at Hebron.

As soon as the death of Ishbosheth was universally known, all the tribes sent deputies to David, acknowledging his right to the sovereignty, and promising him their allegiance. They assured him that they had ever entertained the greatest zeal for him, even during the life of Saul, and when they had the honour to serve under his command; and farther observed, that the prophet Samuel, according to God's order and appointment, had declared him king, and that the government should descend from him to his posterity.

David entertained the deputies with great re-

spect, and made a solemn league of friendship with them, in consequence of which, they now appointed him king of all the tribes of Israel, after having reigned at Hebron over that of Judah only for the space of seven years and six months.

Being thus invested with full regal power, and having a number of brave and gallant soldiers to attend him, David formed the resolution of making an expedition against Jerusalem, which was at that time inhabited by the Jebulites, a people belonging to the race of Canaanites. He accordingly marched with his army towards the place, and when he came to the castle, or fort of Zion, which commanded the city, he summoned the inhabitants to surrender. They, thinking the place impregnable, bid him defiance, telling him, by way of derision, that the meanest of them all (even their blind and lame) were able to defend it against all he could do. This insult so irritated David, that he determined to dispossess them of the place, which was, indeed, remarkably strong both from art and nature. To effect this he caused proclamation to be made throughout the camp, that whoever first took the fort should be promoted to the office of Captain-General of all his forces. This had the desired effect, a general spirit of emulation taking place among the people; but Joab, who was naturally a courageous and enterprising man, being more alert than the rest, got before all, and possessed himself of a principal part of the fortress. The troops immediately following Joab, the besieged soon gave way, and in a short time totally abandoned the place. The inhabitants of the city seeing this immediately fled, so that the whole became an easy conquest to the victors.

After this David enlarged the buildings of the lower city, which he extended so far as to join with the citadel, made it his place of residence, and gave it the name of *The City of David*. In the mean time Joab, whom (agreeable to David's promise) he had appointed captain-general of his forces, repaired and beautified the old city of Jebus or Jerusalem §, for the better accommodation of the people.

About this time Hiram, king of Tyre ||, having heard of the great success of David in all his undertakings,

but it is as true, that he returned to it now, as he departed from it before, upon a pique, and from motives of ambition, interest and revenge. He well knew the purposes and declarations of God in relation to David, and yet he deliberately opposed himself to them. And it is but just in the appointments of Providence (and nothing is more conspicuous in his government of the world) not to permit the wicked to effect that good from wrong motives, which they once obstructed upon the same principles. The occasions of duty, once notoriously neglected, seldom return, at least to equal advantage. Let no man decline the good that is in his power; if he once does so, he is no more worthy to be the happy instrument of effecting it in the hand of God."

† The manner in which Josephus makes David express himself on this occasion is to the following effect: "Ye basest of wretches (says he) immediately prepare yourselves to receive the just reward of your horrid villainy. What! have ye so soon forgot the punishment I inflicted on him who brought me the crown of gold belonging to Saul, after he said he had slain him? Or can you suppose me so abandoned a wretch as to countenance the murder you have committed on your master by taking off his head in his own bed-chamber; the head of him who never did injury to any man, and who, in an especial manner, heaped his favours on you? Wherefore I will avenge his death by

"taking away your lives, and revenge myself on you for having cut him off under pretence of doing me a service. You shall suffer for the breach of faith to your master, and the scandal you would have cast on me; for what greater wound could any man have given me in my reputation than to expose me for a person that could take pleasure in the tidings, or give countenance to the committing so barbarous and inhuman a murder?"

§ "The city of Jerusalem (says Josephus) was called, in the days of Abraham, Solyna; and it is imagined that Homer points at this city when he speaks of the people of Solyna, that word, in the Hebrew language, signifying a fortress or place of defence. From the time Joshua waged war with the inhabitants of Canaan, and after conquering them divided their country among the Hebrews, the Jebusites still kept possession of this city, nor could they be driven out of it till it was effected by David, which was an interval of no less than 515 years."

|| The primitive name of this prince was Abibalus; but before he entered into a league of amity with David, he changed it to Hiram, that so it might be the standing name of him and his successors, in like manner as was the case with Pharaoh, and after him Ptolemy, in Egypt, Abimelech among the Philistines, and Cæsar among the Roman Emperors. The name, in the Hebrew language, signifies, *he lives that*

undertakings, sent ambassadors to congratulate him on his accession to the throne, and to join with him in a treaty of alliance and friendship. He likewise sent David a present of Cedar trees, with carpenters and other artificers, to assist him in erecting a royal palace.

After David had established himself in his new city, he took several other wives, as also many concubines. By these he had, in the course of time, eleven sons, namely, Shammuah, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphalet; besides a daughter named Tamar, who was sister to Absalom.

The Philistines having heard of David's increasing greatness, and supposing it a sure preface of their own downfall, determined to check his power as soon as possible; to effect which they raised a considerable army, and marching towards Jerusalem, encamped in the valley of Rephaim, not far from David's new city.

David, not chusing to engage in any enterprise without first consulting the Divine Oracle, applied himself to the Lord, to know his pleasure whether or not he should go against the Philistines, as also, if he did, what would be the issue of the battle. Having received for answer that he should go, and that his attempts would be crowned with success, he immediately drew out his men, and marching against the Philistines fell on them so suddenly that they were thrown into the greatest confusion, and in a short time totally routed. Great numbers were killed on the spot, many others desperately wounded, and the remainder saved themselves by flight. The Philistines left behind them their images, or idols, which they were always accustomed to bring with them to battle, from a superstitious notion that by their means they should prove victorious. These David ordered to be gathered together in one pile, the whole of which were committed to the flames. In memory of this victory, David called the place Baal-perazim, which signifies, *the Lord hath broken forth upon mine enemies*.

But the Philistines were so far from being intimidated at this overthrow, that, in a short time after, they came again with an army much more considerable than the former. David, on this occasion, again consulted God, who ordered him not to march directly against them, but to take a compass round by a wood of mulberry-trees, which would cover and conceal his march; and that when he heard a sound, or rushing in the trees (which would frighten the Philistines) he should immediately fall on them. David strictly attended to these directions, and, as soon as he discovered the Providential sign, suddenly marched out with his army, fully assured the business he was about would prove successful.

The Philistines gave way at the first onset; and when they found themselves closely attacked, they betook themselves to flight. David pursued them as far as Gazer, a city on the extreme borders of their country, and killed great numbers in the way; after which he returned to their camp, took what valuables they left behind, and destroyed their idols. This victory so sickened the Philistines, that they did not attempt to attack the Israelites for many years after.

The war with the Philistines being now over, and all things quiet, David thought it a very proper season to remove the Ark of God (which, for twenty years had continued in the house of Abinadab at Kirjath-jearim) to a place which he had prepared for it in his own city. For this purpose David assembled the elders and principal men of the respective tribes, and taking with him a strong guard for the protection of the ark, in case any enemy should attempt to attack them, went in grand procession to Kirjath-jearim. Having removed the Ark out of Abinadab's house, instead of carrying it on mens shoulders, they, in imitation of the Philistines, put it into a cart drawn by two oxen, and in this manner proceeded with it towards Jerusalem, the king going before it, and the multitude following after, singing praises to God, and dancing to various tunes played on different instruments, such as harps, psalteries, cornets and cymbals. When they came to a place called Nachon's Threshing-floor, the Ark was near being overturned, upon which Uzzah, one of the drivers, took hold of it to prevent its falling; and for this presumption (not being in holy orders) the Almighty was pleased to punish him with instant death. This melancholy circumstance not only afflicted David, but the whole multitude; and, as a memento, they called the place ever after by the name of Perez-Uzzah, which signifies *the Breach of Uzzah*.

David was so terrified at the sudden death God had inflicted on Uzzah for touching the Ark, that he was apprehensive of meeting the like fate should he presume to carry it to the place intended. Instead, therefore, of proceeding towards the city, he turned out of the way, and went to the house of a righteous man, a Levite, named Obed-edom, in whose custody he left the Ark, where it remained for the space of three months. At the expiration of this time David, having heard of the great prosperity that had attended Obed-edom ever since the Ark had been in his possession, was delivered from the fear he had conceived, and returned his intention of removing it to his own city, which he did in great form and solemnity. He recollected the impropriety of his conduct* in having carried it in a cart from the house of Abinadab, and therefore now ordered it to be carried on the shoulders

that is exalted; or, let him live who is exalted; that is, Let the king live for ever. Hiram's sending to David under this name is the true reason why we find no other mentioned in the scripture for the princes of Tyre.

* There was a very great impropriety in placing the Ark upon a cart, which, according to the law of Moses, ought

to have been carried by the priests upon their shoulders; and the accident that befel Uzzah made David so sensible of his error, that he acknowledged it to the priests at the next removal of the Ark, and caused them to bare it upon their shoulders to the place he had prepared for its reception.

shoulders of the priests. David, on this occasion, dressed himself in a linen ephod†, and went before the Ark dancing and playing on his harp. He was followed by several companies of singing men and trumpeters, and in the rear of the Ark were the elders and chief men of the city. In this manner was the Ark conducted to the place allotted for it, after which David offered sacrifices to God, and then made a feast for the people, giving to each person a cake of bread, a flaggon of wine, and a piece of the sacrifice.

As the procession of the Ark was entering the

city, it happened that Michal, David's wife (the daughter of the late king Saul) saw her husband dancing before it, upon which she upbraided him for his condescension, saying, such levity was beneath the dignity of a king. In reply to this, David told her, that what he had done was in honour of that God who had chosen him to govern Israel, in preference to her own father, and to all other men; and that such condescension would never bring him under any just contempt.

C H A P. X.

David consults the prophet Nathan concerning the building of a temple for the performance of religious worship. Nathan, by the command of God, forbids his doing it, telling him that business was to be reserved for his son, upon which David immediately lays by his intentions, and returns thanks to God. David defeats the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, &c. Receives a considerable present from Toi, king of Hamath. Provides for Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan. Sends ambassadors to Hanun king of the Ammonites, to congratulate him on his accession to the throne. Hanun treats them with great indignity, on which account David goes to war with the Ammonites, and proves victorious. Several petty kings make peace with him, and become tributary. David falls in love with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, one of his officers in the army. He effects his death by stratagem, and afterwards marries Bathsheba, for which he is severely rebuked by Nathan the prophet, who is sent to inform him of the Divine displeasure at his misconduct. Nathan delivers his message by way of parable. David, being sensible of his fault, begs pardon of God for his transgressions, who, in some measure, complies with his request. Birth of Solomon. Joab, having long laid siege to Rabbah, the chief city of the Ammonites, sends for David to receive the honour of taking it. He accordingly goes, takes it by storm, and returns loaded with spoils, in triumph to Jerusalem.

BY this time the palace (which Hiram king of Tyre had furnished David with men and materials to build) was finished; and as he was one day reflecting on the meanness of the house which contained the Ark of God, in comparison with his own, it came into his mind to build a temple for his religious worship, and to place in it the Ark of the Lord. He communicated his design to the prophet Nathan‡, who at first approved of it; but that very night Nathan received a message from God to this effect: "Go, and tell my servant David, I will not permit him to carry his design into execution. The care of this undertaking I shall reserve for one of his sons, over whom I will be a tender father, and will continue the government in the line of his family; and, if he should be guilty of any transgressions I will not totally reject him as I did Saul, but only chastise him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men."

Early the next morning the prophet Nathan communicated these tidings to David, who was so rejoiced at the thoughts of the succession being secured to his posterity, that he immediately repaired to the Ark of God, and throwing himself prostrate before it, addressed his Divine benefactor in words to this effect: "Blessed be thy holy name, O Lord, for all the benefits and mercies thou hast been pleased to bestow on thy servant. Thou hast raised me from the lowest situation in life to the summit of dignity and power. I bless thee for all this; for thy continued providences to myself, and thy promises to my posterity; as also for thy multiplied deliverances and protections to thy own people. Let thy name be magnified forever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee."

As the Almighty had been pleased to refuse David the privilege of building him a temple, and

† David laid aside his royal ornaments, and was girded with a simple ephod, which was used by those who were not priests. His moving in certain solemn measures, suited to music of the same character and tendency, was highly conducive to the purposes of piety; and his mixing with the public festivities of the people was a condescension not unbecoming the greatest monarch. Policy taught Augustus to put himself on a level with his subjects in their public rejoicings; piety taught David, that all men were upon a level in the solemnities of religion.

‡ At what time this prophet began to appear in Israel we are not any where informed. This is the first time the scripture makes mention of him. He was a man of great prudence and fine address, who knew how to mitigate the rigour of his reproofs with a great deal of sweetness and wisdom, which qualified him so well for the conversation of kings, and other great persons. He was equally esteemed and beloved by David, and, in his conduct towards him, maintained a just medium between an inflexible austerity, and a servile flattery.

and had reserved that work for one of his posterity, David thought it advisable to employ his time in subduing his enemies on every side, that when his son (whoever it might be) should come to undertake so great an affair, he might meet with as little interruption as possible.

In consequence of these thoughts David immediately assembled his forces, and resolved first to attack the Philistines, who had twice invaded his territories soon after his accession to the throne. The army being ready, he accordingly marched against the enemy, over whom he had several conquests in different parts, all which he added to the possessions of his own people. He then marched against the Moabites, whom he totally subdued; and having dismounted all their strong places, he slew the greater part of them, reserving such only as were necessary to till the ground.

Having proved thus successful against the Philistines and Moabites, David marched with his army to secure that part of his territories which bordered on the river Euphrates. The Syrians, under the command of Hadadezer, came hither with a strong force to give him battle; but he soon routed them, and, besides 20,000 foot, took 700 horsemen and 100 chariots. He reserved only 100 of the chariots for his own use: the rest he burnt, and hamstringed the horses that they might not afterwards be serviceable in war.

In the mean time Adad §, king of Syria and Damascus, having heard of the ill success of Hadadezer, who was his particular friend and ally, marched with a strong body of forces to his assistance. He joined the remains of Hadadezer's army near the river Euphrates, soon after which a desperate battle ensued between his army and that of David, in which the former was defeated, 22,000 of his men were killed on the spot, and the remainder obliged to save themselves by a precipitate flight.

David, having reduced the Syrians, and made himself master of the greater part of the country, put garrisons in the principal cities, and made the inhabitants tributary. Having done this, he returned home, loaded with spoils and honours; but all the valuable articles, such as gold, silver, and brass, he dedicated to the service of God, by laying them up for the future use of the temple.

When Toi, king of Hamath, heard of the great victories obtained by David, he sent his son Joram to congratulate him on the occasion. He likewise made him a considerable present of gold, silver, and other valuable articles, all which he likewise dedicated to God, in acknowledgment for having destroyed the power of his most inveterate enemies.

Though David's attention had, for some time, been engaged in the prosecution of foreign wars, yet, at the same time, he took care that justice should be administered to his subjects at home, for the effecting of which he had a number of very great men employed in the highest offices of trust. Joab was captain-general; Jehoshaphat, keeper of the records; Zadok and Abimelech, priests; Seraiah, secretary of state; Benaiah, captain of his guard; and his own sons prime-ministers of state.

David was not only a wise and a good prince in the administration of justice to his people, but a faithful and generous friend in private life; and as he had great obligations to Jonathan, neither the splendor of victories, nor the pleasures of prosperity, nor the lustre of his crown, could make him unmindful of his covenant and oath to his former friend, and therefore he had no sooner established peace by his victories over his enemies, but he inquired: *Is there yet any that's left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?* This was great generosity to be thus solicitous for the welfare of an enemy's family, and to form the resolution of advancing to honour and riches any surviving branch of it, without regarding how dangerous such a step might prove to his own security as king of Israel. A suspicious faithless tyrant would at least have kept the family, that imagined they had a right to his kingdom, long enough to have prevented the possibility of their ever disputing it with him; or at least have shut up the heir of it in close imprisonment; or got rid of his fears upon his account by totally destroying him; thinking he might reasonably dispense with his oath to his deceased friend, thro' the necessity of self preservation, and securing to his own family the peaceable succession to his crown. Instances too many may be produced of this conduct. But David had too much honour and generosity to be influenced by such a selfish policy, was influenced by more generous principles and views, and when Ziba, an old servant in the house of Saul, was introduced to him, in consequence of his inquiry after Saul's family, David asked him: *Is there not any of the house of Saul that I may shew him the kindness of God?* i. e. as we understand it, the kindness, which I have obliged myself, by oath and covenant with Jonathan, to shew him. Ziba informed him, that Jonathan had yet a son living, who was lame || in his feet; and who therefore, if Saul's family had any real claim to the crown, by hereditary succession, was the immediate heir to it, as the only son of Jonathan the eldest son of Saul. David however immediately ordered him to be brought to court, and in the most friendly manner, calling him by his name, assured him: *Fear not, for I will*

§ This king Adad is taken notice of by Nicholas of Damascus, who, in the fifth book of his History, says, "A certain valiant man, named Adad, reigned over Damascus and Syria, Phœnicia only excepted. He having declared war against David, several encounters took place between them, but at length he was overcome at Euphrates, behaving himself with the resolution of a brave prince and a great commander." The same writer, speaking of the posterity of Adad, says, "After his death his posterity, for ten succeeding generations, possessed the sovereignty, each at the time he became king, taking upon him the name of

Adad, as the kings of Egypt did that of Pharaoh. The third of these becoming very powerful, resolved to renew the war his father had begun; upon which he made an inroad into Judea, and sacked the country now called Samaria."—This is that Adad who invaded Samaria, when Ahab reigned over Israel.

|| Mephibosheth was very young at the time his father was slain at the battle of Gilboa; the news of which threw the nurse into such consternation, that, as she was endeavouring to make her escape with him, she let him fall, and he received such injury as to be lame ever after.

will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul, thy father, with all which belonged to his family; but thou shalt eat bread at my table continually, as one of the king's sons. This was a noble and truly princely grant. In consequence of this grant, he informed Ziba: *I have given to thy master's son all that pertained to Saul, and to all his house. Thou therefore and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food for his family to eat. But as to Mephibosheth himself, thy master's son, he shall eat bread always at my table.* As Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants, the lands David gave to Mephibosheth must have been very extensive to require so many hands to cultivate, and to be sufficient for so numerous a family as Ziba's, and to provide for Mephibosheth's household with a becoming plenty and dignity. Ziba undertook the charge in obedience to the king's order, and was accountable to Mephibosheth for the produce of the estate, he himself residing continually at Jerusalem, and being, in all respects, provided for as one of the royal family.

Some time after this noble instance of generosity and gratitude, David was unavoidably engaged in an unexpected, and, on his part, an unprovoked war with the Ammonites, on the following occasion. Nahash, king of the Ammonites, who was on terms of great friendship with David, dying, David sent ambassadors to Hanun, his son and successor, to condole with him on his father's death, and to congratulate him on his accession to the throne, in grateful acknowledgment of the kindness that had been shewn him by Nahash, his deceased father. *I will, saith David, shew kindness unto Hanun, the son of Nahash, as his father shewed kindness unto me.* But the great men who were about the young king had made him believe that the sole intent of David's sending this embassy was, to spy out the weakness of the city, and in what place it might be most advantageously assaulted. In consequence of this the too credulous prince ordered the ambassadors to be half shaved*, and their cloaths cut short, even to the waist; and with this ignominious appearance did he order them to be dismissed.

As soon as David understood the ill-treatment his ambassadors had received from Hanun, which was previous to their return, he sent messengers to meet them, with orders that they should go to Jericho, and there continue till their beards were again grown; but, for the indignity put upon them, he gave them assurance that he would resent it in a proper manner. He accordingly sent a considerable army, under the command of Joab, to chastise the inhospitable Ammonites,

and to bring their king to account for his conduct. The Ammonites were apprized of David's design, and therefore provided against the worst, by procuring 33,000 mercenaries of the Syrians, who lay encamped at some distance in the fields, whilst their own forces covered the city.

When Joab saw the situation of the enemy he divided his army into two bodies, one of which he placed under the command of his brother Abishai to keep the Ammonites in play, whilst himself, with the other, which consisted of his choicest men, attacked the Syrians. Their agreement was, to relieve each other, if there should be occasion; but Joab, at the first onset, charged the Syrians so close, that (as they were but mercenaries and thought the cause not their own) they soon gave way, great numbers were killed, and the rest fled with the utmost precipitation. The Ammonites seeing this were so dispirited that they secured themselves by immediately retreating to their city; and the season of the year being too far advanced for Joab to lay siege to it, he returned with his army to Jerusalem.

In the mean time Hadadezer, who had assisted the Ammonites with some forces the last campaign, being apprehensive that David would chastise him for his conduct, determined to be before-hand with him. For this purpose, levying a very considerable army, he sent it, under the command of Shobach his general, over the river Jordan as far as Halam, a town on the borders of the half tribe of Manasseh.

As soon as David received intelligence of this he led his army with all expedition against the enemy, and coming up with them sooner than they expected, fell on with such vigour that upwards of 40,000 were killed on the spot, and their general Shobach, having received a mortal wound, died in the field of battle.

In consequence of this success, several petty kings, who had assisted Hadadezer in his expedition, fearing worse consequences might ensue, made peace with David, and became tributary to him; and even Hadadezer himself, being thus forsaken by his confederates, gave him assurance he would no longer espouse the cause of the Ammonites.

David, after being thus victorious, returned with his army to Jerusalem; but, in the beginning of the next spring, he sent Joab with a powerful army against the Ammonites. This general was so successful in his undertakings, that he drove all before him, destroyed whatever came in his way, and at length laid siege to the city of Rabbah, the capital of their country.

While Joab was carrying on the siege of Rabbah, David, though a person of great piety towards

* The wearing of long beards and garments was then (as it still is) the fashion of the east, where they were deemed badges of honour, and consequently, the cutting off, or curtailing of either, was considered as the greatest indignity. Nay, in some places, the cutting off the beard was not only looked upon as a matter of the highest reproach, but also of the severest punishment. It was the same thing antiently among the Indians, and is at this day among the Persians. It was one of the most disgraceful punishments for cowardice in Sparta, for those who turned their backs in the day of

battle were obliged to appear abroad with one half of their beards shaved, and the other half unshaved. There were two reasons which caused the easterns of old, as well as at present, to look upon the beard as venerable: in the first place they considered it as a natural ornament designed to distinguish men from women; secondly, it was the mark of a free man in opposition to slaves: so that, in every view, the insult of Hanun to the ambassadors of David was capital. It was a violation of the law of nature, of hospitality, and of the right of nations.

towards God, justice with respect to man, and a strict observer of the laws and customs delivered by his forefathers, became guilty of a great sin and offence against his Divine Protector. As he was one evening walking on the top of his palace for the benefit of the air, he espied a woman of most exquisite shape and beauty bathing herself in her garden.

Struck with the sight of such an unexpected object, and hurried away by his passion, he immediately sent to inquire who she was, not knowing that she was married, and hoping, undoubtedly, that he might accomplish his desires, without any violation of the religion and laws of his country, by adding her to the number of his wives or concubines. Thus far there is little room for severely censuring him; and yet during this uncertainty, whether or no he could lawfully obtain his wishes, the passion was increasing, as there occurred to his mind no considerations, that immediately forbade him to indulge it. But he was soon informed of her name and circumstances, that she was Bathsheba, a married lady, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, who was a brave distinguished officer at that very time in his service, and at the siege of Rabbah, with Joab, the commander in chief. Had David, as he ought to have done, upon this advice, immediately checked his inclinations, and given up a pursuit, which he now could not but know was highly criminal, he would have been justly celebrated for his self-denial and moderation. But, hurried on and blinded by the excess of his passion, he immediately sent messengers to her. She came, he pursued, she yielded, and sacrificed her honour and duty to the king's inclination, and thereby they incurred both of them the guilt and punishment of adultery.

Some time after this she found herself with child by David, and sent to inform him of the condition she was in. This threw them both into the greatest difficulties; and, after considering what he should do to conceal their guilt, and avoid the scandal, infamy, and punishment, to which the discovery of their criminal correspondence might expose them, he immediately sent for Uriah from the army, who had been absent from home a considerable time; hoping that he would allow himself in all the satisfactions of domestick life, and that by this means their adulterous commerce might remain a secret, and the fatal consequences, they apprehended from its being publicly known, might be effectually prevented.

Uriah, being returned from the army, immediately waited upon the king; who, after inquiring how the general did, and then into the state of the army, and what progress they had made in the siege, ordered him down to his own house to wait for his orders, and refresh himself after his journey; and, as a token of his peculiar favour, sent him provisions for the entertainment of himself and family. Uriah was a rough soldier, and inured to all the difficulties of a camp; and, instead of indulging himself with domestick pleasures, refused to go home, and spent the night amongst the guards of the palace, sleeping only, as the rest of them did, when they were relieved by turns from their duty. David being informed of Uriah's conduct, upon his next audience, asked

him, what it was that prevented him, after the fatigues of his journey, from going down to his house and family? Uriah bravely replied, that, as the ark of the Lord, Israel, and Judah, abode in tents, and Joab his general, and all the forces of the king, were encamped in the open fields, he thought it inconsistent with his station and honour, to lodge in his own house, to indulge himself in feasting, and converse with his own wife; and then bluntly swore, by the king's life, that he would do no such thing.

This peremptory refusal greatly disconcerted the king's measures, and he ordered him to continue amongst his guards for that day and the next, assuring him that he would send him back the morrow after, with proper dispatches for the army. The day before his departure, David treated him at his own table; and such are the low and scandalous shifts, to which the consciousness of guilt reduces men, who would otherwise scorn to submit to them, as that David made Uriah drunk; hoping, that when in liquor, he would naturally do, what he could not prevail with him to do when sober; return to his home, and cohabit with his wife. But, drunk or sober, Uriah was the same, and he still continued with the king's servants and guards as before.

There is no appearance, from any thing in the history, that Uriah had any suspicion of what had passed between David and his wife. Had the king imagined that Uriah had entertained any jealousy of him on that account, he would scarce have made him drunk at his own table, for fear that in his cups he should have blabbed out the secret, and in his passion reproached him to his face. Much less, we think, would David have made him the bearer of the letter to Joab for his own destruction; because, had he thought Uriah jealous of his having debauched his wife, he would have naturally suspected, that he would have been equally suspicious of the king's design upon himself, and by opening the letter to Joab, might have prevented the treacherous and wicked design against his own life, and exposed David's injustice and cruelty to the public detestation and abhorrence.

David was now reduced to the utmost distress. All his arts to cover his guilt had entirely failed him, and his thoughts now suggested to him, that there was but one way left, to prevent the discovery he dreaded, and secure the partner of his crime from the vengeance of her husband, and the punishment of her adultery; and that was, to conceal one sin by committing a worse, and murdering the unhappy husband, to prevent his revenging the infidelity of his wife. The measure was resolved on, and treacherously executed; and, as tho' he imagined it would be some alleviation of his sin, he committed the murder to another hand, and sent Uriah back to Joab with the following letter.

SET YE URIAH IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE HOTTEST BATTLE, AND RETIRE THERE FROM HIM, THAT HE MAY BE SMITTEN AND DIE.

Joab was a fit hand to be employed in such an affair, and immediately obeyed his master's order; for as he went to reconnoitre the city, he observed

observed where the most valiant soldiers were employed in the defence of it, and ordered Uriah to make an attack on that place; where, with some few of the party under him, (being deserted by the rest, who had received private orders how to act) he was killed by a sally from the garrison, and thus sacrificed, bravely fighting for the very person who had planned his destruction.

Joab immediately sent an express with the news to David, who, upon hearing it, calmly wrote back to Joab, as tho' every thing had been carried on with honour, according to the laws of war: The words of his letter were to this effect:

“ Lay not the loss thou hast sustained too much to heart. The sword of war knows no distinction. One as well as another, the commander as well as the common soldier; the bravest and best of men, as well as the meanest, are liable to fall by it. Maintain your courage, persevere in your attack, strengthen the parties you employ, and doubt not of a speedy reduction of the city.”

In the mean time Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, being informed of her husband's death, lamented and mourned for him some days, according to the custom of the country; but as soon as the time was elapsed for observing that ceremony, David sent for her, and took her to wife, soon after which she brought him a son.

This is the account of David's fall, as related by the sacred historian ; a fall attended with numerous circumstances of heinous aggravation, and the attempt to vindicate his conduct, in any of the principal parts of this transaction, would be injurious to the laws of truth and virtue. But if there are any circumstances of alleviation, that can be fairly alledged, justice and candour require, that they should be mentioned ; as well as to own and admit others, that heighten his fault, and render him inexcusable.

There are some crimes peculiarly aggravated by previous deliberate steps, that men take to commit them; when they lay schemes to gratify bad passions, and accomplish purposes they know to be injurious and dishonourable. David, in the beginning of this transaction, seems to be intirely free from every charge of this kind. He did not so much as know who she was, much less that she was a married woman, when he first casually saw her; and the passion he conceived for her, might, for any thing he then knew, be lawful, and such as he might, without any offence, indulge himself in the gratification of. And this would have been the case, under the dispensation in which he lived, had she been a single person. David, therefore, tho' very imprudently, and we think in some degree criminally, did not deliberate upon an affair, which he saw no immediate reason to prohibit him from pursuing; and thereby heightened that inclination, which he ought to have checked, as a good man, till he was sure he had a right to indulge it. By not doing this, it became too strong for his management; and when he had been informed who she was, yet, fired with the imagination, that the beautiful object he beheld had raised in his mind, all other considerations at last gave way, and he immediately resolved to gratify his desires, at the expence of his conscience, honour, and duty. He instantly sends for Bathsheba, she immediately complied with him, and the whole affair seems to have been compleated the very evening it was

begun. Every one must see, that as David had but little time for deliberation, it was not very likely, that in the small interval, between the rise of his passion, and the gratifying it, one in his circumstances should be cool enough to use that deliberation, which was necessary to bring him to himself, and restrain him from the crime he was hurried on to commit; and that therefore his sin, thus far, had not that aggravation which it would have had, if there had been more time and leisure for him to reflect, and had he pursued his criminal inclinations, after having seriously and calmly weighed the nature and consequences of what he was about to do, and used, as too many others in like cases have done, fraud, perfidy, and force, to gratify them.

To say there was no time for any deliberation may be saying too much; for there is scarce any sin so suddenly committed, but there are some moments for reflection; but, in some circumstances, men may be so hurried away by a sudden gust of passion, as that they may be wholly incapacitated by it, rightly to improve those moments. David had no time to prevent the first rise of his passion. It was as instantaneous as the sight, and he might not think himself obliged to suppress it, till after he knew Bathsheba was Uriah's wife; so that all the interval he could have for reflection was only that between his knowing who she was, and his actually possessing her; an interval too intirely engrossed by imagination and desire, to leave room sufficient for the exercise of reason, or the influence of any good principles to restrain him. If David and Bathsheba had been casually together, a more sudden and violent gust of passion could not have hurried him away, without allowing him some time for deliberation, than what the attitude, in which he first saw her, would have naturally excited, and did actually excite; which swept away all consideration and reflection before it, and drove him down a precipice, that well nigh proved his absolute destruction.

We cannot help adding, that Bathsheba herself seems to have too easily yielded to the king's inclination, and thereby rendered it almost impossible for him to suppress it. For the history informs us, that David *sent messengers, and he received her, and she came in unto him, and he lay with her.* Her compliance seems voluntary, unforced, immediate. She should have refused his invitation. But she went, met his passion, indulged it, without, as appears, any reluctance, without remonstrating against David's attempt upon her honour; and thereby prevented those reflections, that her denial and resistance might have occasioned in him, and that might have made him sensible of the enormity of the crime, and preserved him from the commission of it. And how great soever this sin was, David is not the only instance of men's being unhappily betrayed in an evil hour, by the power of a sudden, and unexpected temptation. Too many instances may be produced, even of habitually good and virtuous persons, being drawn aside, in some unguarded moment, and by the force of an unthought-of strong temptation, into the commission of those sins, which, in other circumstances, they would have trembled at, and abhorred the very mention and thought of.

The first crime thus committed, and the
Y y dreaded

dreaded consequences of it appearing, the unhappy prince found himself involved in difficulties, out of which he knew not how to extricate himself. Conscious guilt, concern for his own character, regard for the honour of the fair partner of his crime, and even fear of his own, and her life; (the punishment of their adultery being death;) all united, to put him on forming some contrivance, how to conceal, and to prevent the scandal of it from becoming public. Hence, all the little tricks and shifts he made use of to induce the injured husband to his wife's bed, and father the fruit of their adultery upon him. Who can help pitying a great, and, we will venture to affirm, an hitherto virtuous prince, reduced to these wretched expedients, to prevent that public infamy, which he now apprehended to be near him, and dreaded the falling under?

But even these failed him. What must he do? Where can a man stop, when once he is entangled in the toils of vice, and hath presumptuously ventured into the paths of guilt? Bathsheba must be preserved at any rate. His own honour was at stake to prevent her destruction, and he saw but one way left to secure that end, which he thought himself obliged, at any hazard, to obtain. If Uriah lived, she must inevitably die. Uriah could have demanded the punishment, and seems to have been a soldier of that roughness of temper, and firmness of resolution, as that he would have prosecuted his vengeance against her to the utmost. The law was express and peremptory. Which of the two must be the victim? Cruel dilemma! It is at last determined that the husband should be sacrificed, to save the wife, whom David's passion had made a criminal; and had he forsaken her in this dreadful situation, and left her to her punishment, he would not only have pronounced sentence of death against himself, but been even censured as a monster of perfidiousness and baseness. But how was Uriah to be got rid of? Poison, assassination, or some secret way of destruction, were methods that eastern princes were well acquainted with. David was above them all, and had a kind of generosity even in his very crimes. He causes him to fall in the bed of honour, gloriously fighting against the enemies of his king and country: and having thereby got rid of him, after Bathsheba had gone through the usual time of mourning, he makes her his own wife, and thus secures her from the penalty of death, to which he himself had exposed her. This appears to be the sad situation to which he had reduced himself; and though we are far from mentioning these things to excuse David, or palliate his ag-

gravated offences, yet the circumstances mentioned excite our compassion, carry in the nature of the thing some alleviation of the crime, and should ever be remembered to soften the pen that is drawing up the account of it.

It will, however, be far better for us to look to our own hearts, and gain instruction from this unhappy fall, than to aggravate its guilt, or to suppose it a justification of our own vices. From the view of this mournful event, who can fail to acknowledge the fatal power of temptations, the hazards which the best men run of sinking under them, and the reasons they consequently have to add incessantly vigilance to prayer in order to resist it? On the other hand, we are taught from hence, that the greatest men were still but men; men capable of the highest faults, and of the most odious deviations; that, therefore, we ought to regulate our conduct solely by the laws of religion, and never, absolutely speaking, by the example of any mortal whatever. When, moreover, we consider the moment in which David fell, how dangerous must indulgence and softness appear to us! How sensible should we be of the necessity and obligation we lie under to be so employed, as to give no room for the attacks of temptation, nor suffer it to put our feeble virtue to the trial!

The conduct of David in marrying Bathsheba, and the means he took to obtain her, highly offended the Almighty, who, appearing to Nathan the prophet in a dream, ordered him to inform David how much he was displeased with what he had done. Nathan, who was a man of great prudence, considering within himself that kings, when angry, are prone to give way more to the dictates of passion than reason, resolved not to tell David, in plain terms, the wrath and threatenings of God, but to discover it to him in such a manner, that he should be under the necessity of convicting himself. Accordingly, when he came before the king, he addressed him in words to this effect: "There were, (says he) two men
" who lived in the same city: the one was rich
" and possessed many asses, and great herds and
" flocks of oxen and sheep; the other was poor,
" and had but one little ewe lamb, which he
" had brought up, and nourished with his chil-
" dren. It happened that a stranger came to
" the rich man's house, whom he was bound, by
" honour, to entertain; on which he sent a person
" to bring away by force the poor man's ewe-lamb,
" which he dressed and set before his guest."

As soon as Nathan had finished his parable †, the king exclaimed, "A villain! to do so base
" and

† This parable of Nathan's is beautifully paraphrased in a poetical production, entitled the *Poor Man's Lamb*, written by the Honourable Anne, countess of Winchelsea. After mentioning the marriage of David and Bathsheba, and introducing the prophet Nathan to the king, the author proceeds thus:

Hear me—the cause betwixt two neighbours hear
Thou, who for justice dost the sceptre bear:
Help the oppressed, nor let me weep alone
For him, who calls for succour from the throne.
Good princes for protection are ador'd,
And greater by the shield, than by the sword.
This clears the doubt, and now no more he fears
The cause his own, and therefore stays and hears:

When thus the prophet;—

In a flowery plain
A king-like man does in full plenty reign;
Cast round his eyes, in vain, to reach the bound,
Which Jordan's flood sets to his fertile ground:
Counting his flocks, whilst Lebanon contains
A herd as large, kept by his numerous swains.
Near to this house a lowly cottage stands,
Built by the humbler owner's painful hands;
Fenc'd by a stubble-roof from rain and heat,
Secur'd without, within all plain and neat.
A field of small extent surrounds the place,
In which one single ewe did sport and graze:
This his whole stock, till in full time there came
To bless his utmost hopes, a snowy lamb;

Which,

“and unjust an act. I would have him make fourfold satisfaction, and after that be put to death.” “Why then, says Nathan, *thou art the man*, and out of thy own mouth hast thou pronounced judgment on thyself.” He then told him he had greatly deserved the Divine displeasure, in offending that God who had made him king over all Israel, and Lord of the nations round about him; and who had several times delivered him out of the hands of Saul. That the Almighty had given him wives, whom he had lawfully married, and that for him to take away another man's wife, and to betray her husband to the enemy, and to death, were crimes of the most unpardonable nature. That God would chastise him for this transgression, by causing his women to be ravished in sight of the people; so that he who had committed so great a sin in private should be brought to public shame and punishment. He concluded with this presage, that the son of his unlawful amours should surely die.

David, having received this message from God, by the mouth of Nathan, was thrown into the greatest confusion: he made an ample confession of his guilt, and, in the most fervent manner, implored pardon for the offence he had committed. Till this time he had lived in the fear of God, and, except in the case of Uriah, had never been guilty of any kind of wickedness. Wherefore the Almighty was pleased, upon his sincere repentance, to take compassion on him, commanding Nathan to tell him, that he should not be put to death, neither should the sword depart from his family; but at the same time he should be sensible of those afflictions to which he would have been a stranger had he not transgressed, and that the child which should be born of Bathsheba should surely die.

When Nathan had thus boldly and faithfully executed his commission, he left the king, and the lecture which he read him was worthy the dignity of a prophet's character and station, and such as became the majesty of him to whom it was given. It was grave, strong, affecting, insinuating and polite. The parable, in which he conveyed to him his message from God, is dressed up with all the circumstances of art, tenderness, and delicacy, to move compassion, and, at the same time, to force from him that dreadful sentence: *As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity*; thus drawing from him the sentence of his own condemnation, even

before he perceived it. But how home, how bold was the application, when Nathan said to the king: *Thou art the man — Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife*. How dreadful also the sentence pronounced against him by the order of God! Such as shewed the height of his abhorrence of the crime, and of his displeasure and indignation against him that committed it. But how did the unhappy offender receive this bold and severe remonstrance? Why no sooner, was the application made, but he falls under conviction, acknowledges his offence against God, and owns himself worthy of death; and the psalm he penned on this occasion shews the deep sense he had of the guilt he had contracted, and will be a memorial of the sincerity of his repentance throughout all generations.—See Psalm li.

It was not long before the last part of the sentence pronounced on David for his transgressions took place. Bathsheba was delivered of a son, who, soon after its birth, was suddenly taken ill. David was exceeding desirous of the child's life, and hoping the sentence that it should die might not be absolute, he greatly humbled himself, fasted, and lay all night on the ground, acknowledging the greatness of his offence, and humbly beseeching God, that, as an evidence of his being forgiven, and restored to favour, he would be pleased to spare the child's life. The officers of the household, pitying the king's distress, and being apprehensive he might injure his health, endeavoured to raise him from the prostrate condition in which they saw him, and tried all they could to persuade him to take some proper refreshment. But he would not, by any means, yield to their entreaties. However, his humiliation was in vain; for, on the seventh day after its birth, the child died. His servants were fearful of apprizing him of this event, very naturally imagining, that as he was so distressed while the child was alive, as not to be persuaded by their intreaties, he would be much more inconsolable when he should hear that it was dead. However, the king soon perceived, by their whispering with each other, what had happened, and asked them whether the child was dead? They told him it was; upon which David immediately arose from the earth, washed and anointed himself, put off his mourning habit, dressed himself in his usual manner, went to the tabernacle, and paid his adorations to God; after which he returned to his own house, ordered his table to be spread, sat down, and refreshed himself.

Which, lest the season yet too cold might prove,
And northern blasts annoy it from the grove,
Or tow'ring fowl on the weak prey might seize,
(For with his store his fears too much increase)
He brings it home, and lays it by his side,
At once his wealth, his pleasure, and his pride;
Still bars the door, by labour call'd away,
And, when returning at the close of day,
With one small mess himself and that sustains,
And half his dish it shares, and half his gains.
—When to the great man's table now there comes
A lord as great, follow'd by hungry grooms:
For those must be provided sundry meats,
The best for some, for others coarser cakes!
One servant, diligent above the rest,
To help his master to contrive the feast,

Extols the lamb, 'twas nourish'd with such care,
So fed, so lodg'd, it must be princely fare;
And having this, my lord his own may spare. }
In haste he sends, led by no law but will,
Not to intreat, or purchase, but to kill.
The messenger arrives; the harmless spoil
Unus'd to fly, runs bleating to the toil:
Whilst for the innocent the owner fear'd,
And, sure, would move, cou'd poverty be heard!
“Oh spare, he cries, the product of my cares!
My stock's increase! the blessings on my prayers!
My growing hope, and treasure of my life!”
More was he speaking when the murd'ring knife
Shew'd him his suit, tho' just, must be deny'd,
And the white fleece in its own scarlet dy'd;
While the poor helpless wretch stands weeping by,
And lifts his hands for justice to the sky.

self. His servants, surprized at his conduct, took the liberty of asking him, why he fasted and wept for the child whilst it was alive; and rose from the ground, and eat his food, as soon as he heard it was dead? David told them, that whilst the child was alive he fasted and wept, because he could not tell but God might be so far gracious to him as to preserve the child's life; but that, since it was dead, his fasting could be of no avail to restore it to life, and that he must follow the child to the grave, though the child could never return to him.

It may appear strange to some that David should have been so very desirous of the life of this child, seeing that if it had lived, it would certainly have been a visible monument of his sin and guilt. But David was, in his nature, exceeding fond of children; God had pardoned his sin, and he wished for the child's life as a proof of it; Uriah was dead; he was actually married to Bathsheba, and the child born in wedlock. These, and other like circumstances, he might probably think, would, in some measure, lessen or cover the reproach that might otherwise have been cast upon himself and child for the sin to which it owed its birth. And as Bathsheba seems to have been greatly concerned for the preservation of its life, apprehending probably that should it die, David's affection for her might be lessened, and that he might upon more serious reflection have intirely dismissed her, as the occasion of the guilt he had contracted, and the punishments that had been threatened to him upon account of it; his affection to her, added to the other mentioned considerations, might make him more ardently wish for the child's pre-

servation, and earnestly pray God to spare it. But when the child was dead, he quietly acquiesces, and immediately pays his devotions to God, the great disposer of life and death; and thus humbly submits to one part of the punishment inflicted on him.

Bathsheba was, for some time, inconsolable for the loss of her son, during which David did all he could to comfort her and alleviate her afflictions. They again cohabited together, the consequence of which was, that, in the proper course of time, she had another son, whom David called Solomon ‡, which signifies *peaceable*, and whom God was pleased to favour from its earliest infancy. David put him under the care of Nathan the prophet, who called his name Jedidah, that is, *beloved of the Lord*.

During these occurrences Joab was carrying on the siege of Rabbah, and, renewing his assaults more or less every day, at length got possession of the works which supplied the city with water. Having thus far distressed the enemy, he dispatched a messenger to acquaint David, that the city was reduced to the utmost extremity; that it certainly could not hold out much longer, and therefore he desired him to come in person, that he might have the honour of taking it. David, in conformity to his general's request, went with a strong reinforcement, and in a short time made himself master of the place. He took the king's crown, which was of immense value, made all the inhabitants captives §, and having possessed himself of abundance of rich spoil, returned with his army, in triumph to Jerusalem.

CHAP.

‡ The word Solomon is properly derived from *Schalom*, which signifies *peace*, intimating that his reign should be *peaceable*: but Nathan gave the name of Jedidah, which signifies *the beloved of God*. The scriptures, however, never call him by this name, only by that of Solomon; but for what reason we cannot tell, unless we may suppose that the people being long harassed in war during his father's reign, might be pleased with this name, and use it rather than the other to intimate their hopes and long desire of peace. And for this reason, among others, it may be inferred, that Solomon was born after the conclusion of the Ammonitish war, though the sacred history takes occasion, from the death of Bathsheba's first-born, to relate that event first. Bathsheba had some time after another son, whom David called Nathan; and it is in him that the two lines of Our Saviour's genealogy unite themselves, who on Joseph's side, descended from Solomon, and on Mary's from Nathan. See Matth. i. 6, 7. Luke iii. 31.

§ The words in the text are, *And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kilns: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon*. As this treatment of the Ammonites (according to the literal sense of our version) may appear shocking to our readers, it may not be improper to inform them that the words will bear a much milder interpretation. They may be rendered thus: *And he brought forth the people, and put them to the saw, and to iron harrows, and to axes of iron, and made them pass by, or to, the brick-kilns*; that is, he made them slaves, and put them to the most servile employments, such as sowing, harrowing, or making iron harrows, or mining, or hewing of wood, and making of bricks. The Syriac version is, *he bound them with iron chains, and made them pass before him in proper companies at a*

time; he put them in, or to, the saw, &c. and made them pass by the brick-kiln. In the Arabic version it is, *he bound them all with chains, killing none of the Ammonites*. This account is farther confirmed by the next clause, *thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon*; for, had he destroyed all the inhabitants by these, or any other methods of severity, it would have been an almost total extirpation of them: and yet we read of them afterwards as united with the Moabites, and the inhabitants of Seir, and forming a very large army to invade the dominions of Jehoshaphat. It may be added, that if the punishments inflicted on those people were as severe as our version represents them, they were undoubtedly inflicted by way of reprisals. Nahash, the father of Hanun, in the wantonness of cruelty, would not admit the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead to surrender themselves to him on any other condition than that of every one consenting to have their right-eye thrust out, that he might lay it as a reproach upon all Israel. If, therefore, (supposing our translation to be the most correct) these severities of David were now exercised by way of retaliation for former cruelties of this nature, it will greatly lessen the horror that may be conceived on account of them, as well as, in some measure, justify David's using them. And as the sacred writers, who have transmitted this history to us, do not pass any censure on David for having exceeded the bounds of humanity in this punishment of the Ammonites, we may reasonably conclude, either that the punishment was not so severe as our version represents it, or that there was some peculiar reason that demanded this exemplary vengeance, and which, if we were acquainted with it, would induce us to pass a more favourable judgment concerning it; or that the law of nations then subsisting admitted such kind of executions upon very extraordinary provocations, though there are scarce any that can justify them.

C H A P. XI.

Amnon, David's eldest son, ravishes his sister Tamar, who, in her distress, flies to her brother Absalom for protection. Absalom revenges the injury done his sister by murdering Amnon, after which, to secure himself from the resentment of his father, he flies to Geshur. He is at length restored to favour by the contrivance of his uncle Jonadab, assisted by an old woman of Tekoah. Absalom engages in an open rebellion against his father. David leaves Jerusalem, and Absalom enters it, with his great friend and counsellor Abithophel. Absalom rejects Abithophel's council, for which the latter is so enraged that he hangs himself. Absalom engages the army of his father, is defeated, and slain.

DAVID had been but a short time at Jerusalem, after conquering the Ammonites, before a circumstance occurred in his family which gave him the greatest uneasiness, and convinced him that the loss of his first son by Bathsheba was but the beginning of those sorrows which Nathan the prophet had denounced against him from the Lord for his late transgressions; *I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house.*

David had several sons, but only one daughter, a virgin, named Tamar, who was own sister to Absalom, by Maacha, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur. She was most exquisitely beautiful in her person, and possessed of every female accomplishment. It happened that Amnon, the eldest son of David, by another queen, fell desperately in love with her, and, having no expectations of accomplishing his wishes in obtaining her to wife, was so inwardly afflicted, that he visibly declined in his health, no person whatever suspecting the cause ||.

Jonadab, the brother of David, who had a particular friendship for Amnon, finding him thus situated, enquired the cause of his illness, and asked what could occasion him so to languish and pine away, when he was the king's son, and might therefore expect that his father would grant him every thing he could desire. Amnon frankly told him he was in love with Tamar, his brother Absalom's sister; upon which Jonadab advised him to keep his bed, and to desire the king, when he came to visit him, to permit his sister to provide him some sustenance

in his presence, that he might receive and eat it from her hands; whereby he might find an opportunity of enjoying her according to his wishes, in consequence of which, as the affair could not be remedied, he might be allowed to marry her.

Amnon took his uncle's advice, and the king, not suspecting any intrigue, readily consented to his son's proposal. He ordered Tamar to attend him, who immediately obeyed her father's commands, and provided for her brother such food as he wanted*. As soon as it was ready, Amnon ordered all the people who were in the room, except his sister, to withdraw. This being done, Tamar went to his bedside with the provision, upon which he immediately laid hold of her, and plainly discovering his intentions by beginning to use violence towards her, she cried out, *Nay, my brother, do not force me: for no such thing ought to be done in Israel.* Think of the infamy it will bring on me; and as for yourself, you will be accounted throughout the nation a profligate fool, void of all honour, conscience and virtue. "Speak to the king, and he will give me to you in marriage†." But Amnon was deaf to all the remonstrances of his sister, and being stronger than she, he violated her honour, and impiously indulged his own incestuous desires.

Amnon had no sooner obtained his unwarrantable wishes of his sister, than he conceived an absolute aversion towards her, and the violence of his hatred was much stronger than that of his former affection; insomuch, that he bade her instantly

|| It is natural to think that the passion of love is no where so wasting and vexatious, as where it is unlawful. A quick sense of guilt, especially where it is enormous, as in the present instance, strikes the soul with horror; and the impossibility of an innocent gratification loads that horror with desperation. A conflict too cruel and too dreadful for human bearing. Witness the two most remarkable instances of it found in history; that of Antiochus for Stratonice his mother-in-law, and this of Amnon for Tamar his sister. Indeed that of Antiochus appears the less criminal of the two, inasmuch as he seemed determined to conceal his till death, and at the same time to hasten that death to prevent its publication, had not the sagacity of his physician discovered it. Though possibly Amnon had done the same, had not the importunity of his false and subtle friend Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother, drawn the secret from him. It is lamentable to think that the heirs of royalty, whose virtue is of infinitely more consequence than that of meaner men, should yet be under more temptations to taint it from

the poison of infectious flatterers.

* It seems to have the custom of antient times for ladies of the first rank and fashion to be well versed in cookery, and employ themselves, on proper occasions, in dressing food. Tamar had been brought up to this; and Dr. Shaw assures us, that the greatest princes of the Arabians are not ashamed to fetch a lamb from the herd and kill it, while the princess is impatient till she hath prepared her fire and her kettle to dress it. He farther observes, that the Arabians are the same people, except in their religion, that they were two or three thousand years ago, not having embraced any novelties either in their dress or behaviour.

† Tamar could not but know that her marriage with Amnon, her half-brother, was forbidden by the law, and therefore she seems to have said this in her hurry and fright, hoping, by these means, to prevent her brother's violence, and bring him to reason, by putting him in mind, that if he really loved her, he might obtain her in a more honourable way, and marry her even by David's consent.

instantly arise and be gone †, Tamar told him he could have no reason for treating her in so cruel a manner, and that it did not become him to make the first injury he had done a pretence for doing her a much greater, by exposing her to public infamy and reproach. But Amnon was not to be softened, and therefore, calling one of his servants, he ordered him to turn her out of doors. *Put now, said he, this woman from me, and bolt the door after her.* The servant did as he was ordered, upon which Tamar rent the variegated robe with which she was dressed, threw ashes upon her head, and laying her hand upon it went crying through the streets to the house of her brother Absalom. As soon as Absalom saw his sister's distressed situation he suspected what had happened, and said to her, *What! hath Amnon thy brother been with thee?* Say nothing of the affair, my sister; *as he is thy brother*, lay it not to heart, but bear the injury with patience. As Tamar could seek no remedy herself she was obliged to be content with her brother Absalom's advice, in whose house she secluded herself from all company, bemoaning the wretched state into which she had unhappily and unwarily fallen.

Absalom was not of a temper to brook the injury done to his sister. He mortally hated Amnon on account of it; but concealed his intended revenge till a proper opportunity should offer, saying nothing to his brother either by way of civility or reproach. In the mean time David, having heard of the circumstance, was greatly afflicted; but as Amnon was his eldest and most beloved son, he did not think proper to expose him by public punishment, though, at the same time, there is no doubt but he severely chastised him for his conduct in private.

About two years after this infamous conduct of Amnon, his brother Absalom intended to give a feast at his estate in Baal-Hazor, near Ephraim, on account of the shearing of his sheep, which was customary, and always held as a time of festivity and joy. On this occasion Absalom invited all his brethren to the entertainment, and, applying himself to the king, intreated, that he also, with his attendants, would favour him with their company. To this, however, David, though strongly urged, would by no means consent, but softened his refusal by blessing Absalom, and wishing him prosperity. As Amnon appears to have been yet under the king's displeasure, and under confinement by his father's order, Absalom particularly asked the king's leave that his brother Amnon might be permitted to attend them. David seemed unwilling to consent to this request, saying, *Why should he go with*

thee? Don't ask my consent to it. However, on Absalom's farther pressing him, he at length allowed him to accompany the rest of his brethren, little suspecting that, as he had been himself invited, Absalom could have any intention of destroying Amnon.

Absalom, having now got his brother into his possession, had the desired opportunity of executing his long-intended revenge on him for the dishonour he had done his sister Tamar. He accordingly gave orders to his servants who attended the feast, that as soon as they saw Amnon grow warm and merry with drinking, they should, upon his giving them notice, immediately dispatch him; assuring them, that as they acted by his command, he would justify and protect them. *Have not I commanded you,* said he; *be courageous and valiant.* Do not be afraid, but execute my orders with firmness and resolution.

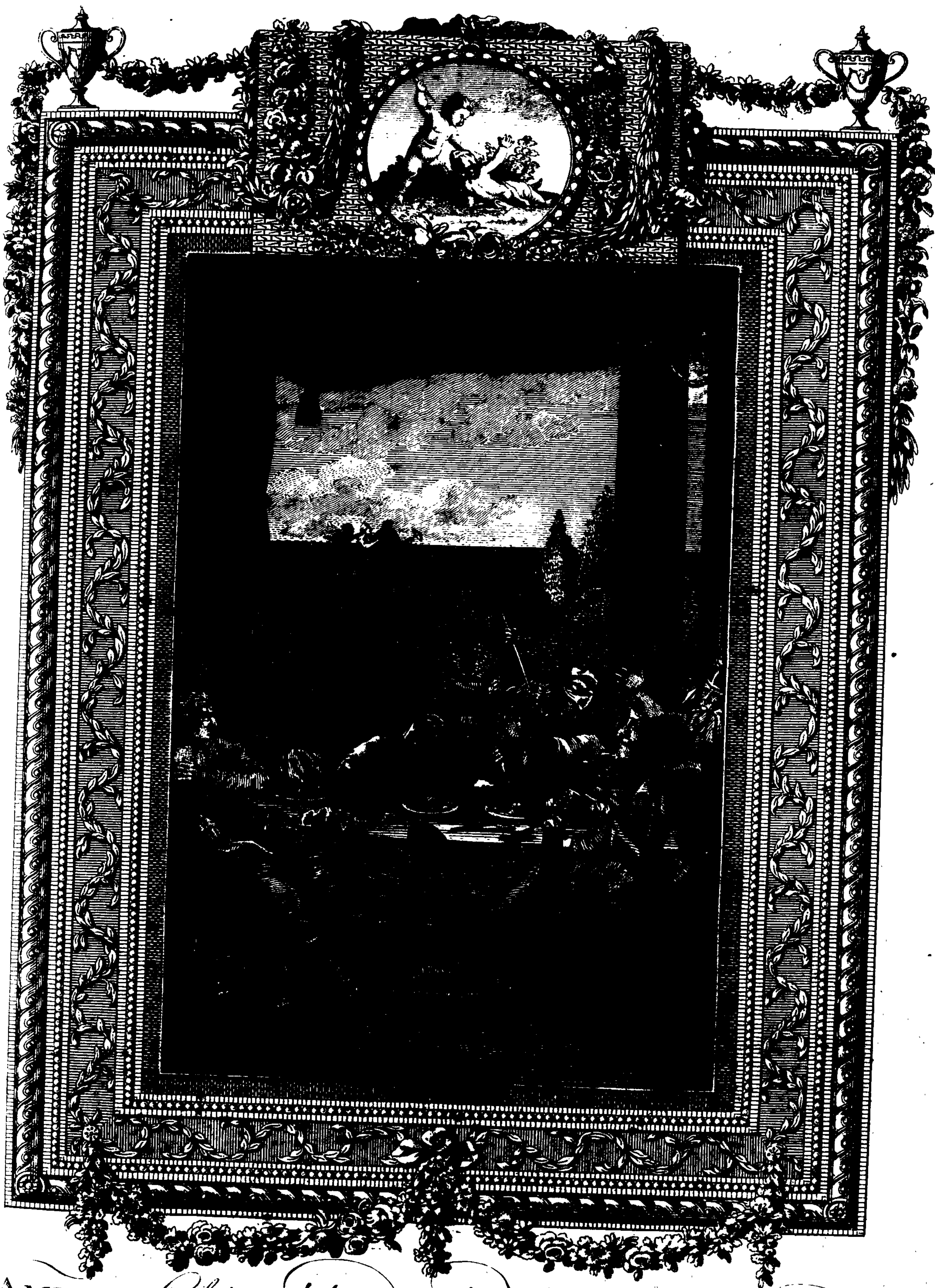
The servants of Amnon did as they were commanded, and as soon as the king's other sons saw their brother murdered, they immediately arose from the table, fled every one upon their own mule, and made the best of their way to Jerusalem. But before their arrival there, a report had been spread through the city, and reached David himself, that Absalom had slain all his sons, and that not one of them had escaped the slaughter. This apprehension put David into the greatest agony, and tearing his garments, he threw himself on the earth; all his servants standing round him with their cloathes rent, expressing their concern and grief on so mournful an occasion.

But Jonadab, Amnon's friend, who guessed what the real fact was, immediately set the affair right, by telling the king he need not distress himself by supposing that all his sons were cut off, for that Amnon only was killed, Absalom having declared that he would be thus revenged on Amnon from the very day he had violated the chastity of his sister Tamar. He therefore begged the king to moderate his grief, since Amnon was the only person who had lost his life, and that the rest of his sons were all safe.

While Jonadab was thus endeavouring to comfort the king, the centinel who was placed without the gates of the city to give notice of all persons coming to Jerusalem, gave information that there was a great number of people coming behind the post where he was stationed, and by the hill side; upon which Jonadab immediately said to the king, *Behold, the king's sons come: as thy servant said, so it is.* He had no sooner said this, than they all arrived, and on coming

† Interpreters seem to be at a great loss to find out the reason, why Amnon's love to his sister should so soon be converted into such an hatred, as to make him act so rudely, so brutally towards her; but it is no uncommon thing for men of violent and irregular passions to pass from one extreme to another. The shame, which accompanies every base action, the remorse and repentance, and many bad consequences, that immediately pursue it, makes a recoil in every man's temper; and therefore it is no wonder, that a libidinous young man, who would not spare so much as his own sister, should, after the enjoyment of her, and when

the ardour of his lust was satisfied, be seized with a contrary passion, and hate the object he loved so much before, when he came coolly to compare the pleasure and the sin together, the shortness of the one, and the heinousness of the other. He hated his sister, when he should have hated himself; and, as this outrageous treatment of her made it impossible for his guilt to be concealed, so it appears as if Providence had abandoned him to the tumult of his intemperate mind, on purpose to make the punishment of David's adultery more flagrant, and the prophet's prediction of *raising up evil to him out of his own house*, more conspicuous.



AMNON assassinated by order of his Brother ABSALOM.

coming into David's presence they immediately burst into tears, which drew fresh tears from David and all his attendants.

In this assassination of Amnon David could not but see the farther just retaliation of Providence for his own aggravated sin in the murder of Uriah, and the recollection of it must greatly enhance the bitterness of his grief, open afresh the wounds of his conscience, renew his repentance before his offended God, and cause him to deprecate the further effects of his displeasure.

With respect to Absalom, after he had murdered his brother he immediately fled to Talmai, king of Geshur, his grandfather, with whom he was safe from the effects of his father's displeasure, and intended to continue there till he could find out some means to pacify his anger, and be restored to his favour and presence. He abode here full three years, in which time David's grief for the loss of Amnon subsided, and as he could not be recovered to life, his affection to his banished son began to revive, he wished to be reconciled to him, and wanted to find out some method whereby he might be induced to recall him from his exile, and bring him back again to Jerusalem.

Joab, perceiving the inclinations of the king, and his uneasiness at the long absence of Absalom, took the following method to engage him to order his return to the city and court. He sent to Tekoah (a city about twenty miles from Jerusalem) for a woman who was remarkable for her prudence, and whom he knew he could trust with the management of the affair on which he intended to send her to the king. He ordered her to personate the character of a widow woman in great distress, to put on her mourning habit, not to anoint herself with oil §, nor do any thing for the ornament of her person, but to appear in all respects as one that had been long mourning for a dead son. He then informed her of the nature of the complaint she was to make, and how she was to apply it when she found she had moved the royal compassion towards her; having done which he sent her to the king, not doubting but by this artful management he should bring over David to his design, and ingratiate himself with Absalom by procuring his restoration.

The woman, according to Joab's instructions, went to the court, and having obtained an audience of the king, prostrated herself before him, and earnestly implored his help. He asked her what was her complaint? She told him she had lost her husband, and was a disconsolate widow; that she was left with two sons, who having quarrelled in the field, and there being no person present to part them, one of them was unhappily killed by the other. On this account (said she) the whole family of the deceased is risen up against thine handmaid, demanding that he who killed his brother should be deli-

vered up to them, that they may put him to death for having taken away his brother's life, that by destroying the heir they may divide his inheritance among them. Thus will they *quench my coal which is left* ||, and not leave to my deceased husband either name, or remainder, on the face of the earth.

David, (moved with compassion at the woman's story, and finding, by her account, there were some alleviating circumstances in the case, that he might be slain without premeditated design and malice, that there were not any witnesses who could prove his being wilfully murdered as the quarrel happened in a field where no one was present but themselves, that two witnesses were necessary by the law in cases of murder, and that the prosecution was carried on rather with a desire to strip the poor family of its patrimony than from any regard to justice) immediately said to the woman, "Return home, and I will give orders according to thy desire."

The woman, to remove any scruple the king might have for rescuing her son from the avenger of blood, said to him, "My Lord, O king, if there be any sin in thy preserving him from death, let the punishment of it fall on me, and on my father's house, but *the king and his throne be guiltless.*" David told her, that if any person spoke to her on the affair she should bring him before him, and he would prevent him from giving her any farther trouble. The woman, not yet seeming fully satisfied, said to him, *Let the king remember the Lord thy God*, and let me beseech thee, by his mercy, that thou wilt not suffer the avenger of blood to make any farther destruction in my family, and after I have lost one son, to take away the life of the other. The king, to give her the fullest assurance of saving him that she could desire, swore by the living God that he would protect him from all danger. *As the Lord liveth*, said he, *there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.*

It appears by David's answers to the widow that he did not yet guess at the drift of her complaint to him, and had not made the least application of it to his own case; though the circumstances of her story, of one brother's killing the other, of the avenger of blood, and destroying the heir, might have naturally created in him some suspicion of her real motives. However, she had artfully prepared the way to discover it to him, as she had got him to promise, that he would preserve her living son from the avenger of blood, and to swear that no harm should come to him for the crime with which he was charged; as she had brought to his mind the mercy of God, and thereby insinuated, that as he sat on God's throne, he had the example of God himself to justify him in extending mercy, on particular occasions, to persons who had forfeited their lives to justice, by taking away the lives of others. Having done all this, she next begs the king

§ Ointments were in great esteem and constant use among the ancients, as the means of cleanliness, and to give a grateful odour to their bodies, as these ointments were mixed up with the richest perfumes. At their festivals, especially amongst the rich and prosperous, they used them for the refreshment of their guests, and to render the entertainment more acceptable and delightful. But as great affliction an

distress naturally create negligence of person and dress, they forbore anointing themselves at such seasons, as inconsistent with the condition of mourners.

|| She compares her son to a live coal, because he was the only hope of continuing her husband's name and family; as a burning coal, when a person has but one left, is the only means of preserving the fire.

king to indulge her in what she had further to offer to his consideration ; which being granted, she proceeded in words to this effect : “ Since thou hast granted this favour to thine handmaid, that the avenger of blood shall not pursue my son to destruction, why wilt thou deny the same grace to thine own son, to the prejudice of the whole people of God ? In extending your compassion to me, you seem to blame your own conduct, in not rescuing your son from the avenger of blood, and restoring him from his banishment. We are all naturally subject to death, and, when dead, our lives are no more capable of being recovered than water that is spilt upon the ground, and can the decease or banishment of thy living son recover to life him that is already dead ? God himself doth not take away the life of the slayer *, but hath contrived the means for his safety, and that though banished for a while, he may not be for ever driven from his presence. I have therefore presumed to speak of this affair unto my Lord the king, especially as I have been terrified by the murmurs of the people, who are grown uneasy at the continued banishment of the king’s son, and because I encouraged myself to hope, that he would grant the request of his handmaid in his behalf. I doubted not but, if the king, in his great clemency and mercy, would deliver me from the hands of the man, who would destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God, he would give me a favourable answer with respect to his own, as it will give great satisfaction to all his people ; for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king ready to attend the voice of mercy, as well as the demand of justice ; and let thy Lord be continually with thee to direct and prosper thee.”

From the whole management of this affair it appears evident that the woman was a person of distinguished sagacity, and well acquainted with the nature of the human heart. Her arguments, if not always conclusive, are very plausible, and by drawing in the king, by the dictates of her compassion, solemnly to promise his protection to her son, she awakened all his pity and tenderness towards his own, and almost engaged him, before he was aware of himself, to bring him from his exile, and restore him to favour.

David, upon this application of the widow, immediately perceived, that she had been tutored in her lesson by some of his courtiers, to make this attempt for the restoration of Absalom, and therefore commanded her to answer him plainly the question he was going to ask her ; and when she had promised to obey him, he said to her : *Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this ?* Is not this whole affair his contrivance ? and is not he the person, who hath sent you to me on this errand ? She immediately replied, As thy soul liveth, my

lord the king, no evasion whatsoever can conceal the truth from my lord the king. It is even as thou hast said ; for thy servant Joab commanded me, and put all that I have now spoken into the mouth of thy handmaid ; that by representing the case of my son, and obtaining protection for him, I might put the king in mind of his own son, and induce him, by the goodness of his nature, to forgive him his offence, and recall him from banishment. “ The wisdom of my lord (said she) is like that of an angel, for he knows every thing that passes throughout the whole land.”

Joab was in waiting to know what would be the event of the widow’s representation, and being called in by the king, David told him he had granted his request, and ordered him to go immediately, and bring back Absalom to Jerusalem. Joab prostrated himself before the king, and thanked him for this instance of his goodness, adding, “ This day hath thy servant had the fullest assurance of my lord the king’s great regard for him, in so graciously vouchsafing to answer his request.” Having said this, he immediately set out for Geshur, and soon returned with Absalom to the city. The king, however, refused to see his son, and gave orders that he should strictly confine himself to his own house, where he remained for two years, without being once admitted into the presence of the king his father.

Absalom, with respect to his person, was one of the handsomest men in the kingdom : there was not a single blemish in him from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, so that he was held in admiration by all who saw him. He was remarkable for hair, both for the thickness and length of it, and which grew so heavy and burthensome to him, that he was forced every year to poll his head. He had three sons, besides a daughter, named Tamar, who was one of the most handsome and lovely of her sex.

As Absalom was naturally of a lively and enterprising disposition, he could not tell how to digest the confinement under which his father had placed him. He looked upon himself as heir to the crown, and might probably suspect, from his father’s long refusal to be reconciled to him, that he intended to exclude him from the succession, and to substitute one of his brothers in his stead. This, indeed, he well deserved for the murder of his brother Amnon, and there is little room to doubt but this was what David had determined in his own mind, after he had seen such an instance of his perfidious and revengeful temper. Absalom, therefore, wanted to enjoy his full liberty, that he might be able to take the proper measures for defeating his father’s purposes, and securing to himself the succession to his throne.

After Absalom had been confined in his own house for the space of two full years, he one day sent for Joab, to desire him to wait on the king, in

* The law had provided, not only that the slayer should be safe from the avenger of blood in one of the cities of refuge, but that after the death of the high-priest he should return from the place of his retreat into the land of his inheritance ; and the argument which the woman makes use of to induce David to pardon and recall his son was, that God

had not only appointed a place of refuge for the slayer, where he might be secure from vengeance, but also limited the time of his confinement to that place, after which he was to return to, and be put into full possession of, his inheritance ; thereby insinuating, that having such an example, he might and ought to pardon and recall his son.

in order to obtain leave to see him, that he might be fully restored to his favour. Joab either supposing that such an application would not be agreeable to the king, or from some disgust he had taken to Absalom himself, refused to come near him. This highly provoked Absalom, who was resolved to take more effectual methods to procure an interview with Joab, and as their two estates were contiguous to each other, he ordered his servants to burn down a field of barley belonging to the general. The servants obeyed his orders, and when Joab was informed of the injury that had been done him, and by whom, he immediately went to Absalom to complain of it, and to ask the reason why he had destroyed his corn. Absalom without making any farther apology, answered, it was because he would not come, after his repeated desire to see him: that he wanted him to wait upon the king his father, to whom he might represent that his being recalled from Geshur gave him but little satisfaction, and that it would have been a less punishment to him to have continued there, than to be so near the king, and yet wholly excluded from his presence: that since his return to Jerusalem his conduct had been unblameable, and that if in any thing he had behaved contrary to his allegiance and duty to the king, he willingly submitted to be put to death.

Joab immediately carried this message to the king, who ordered Absalom to be brought into his presence. Joab accordingly returned to Absalom, and bringing him with him to the palace, introduced him to David. As soon as Absalom saw his father he prostrated himself on the ground; upon which David immediately raised him up and kissed him, in token of his having forgiven what was passed, and that he was reconciled to him for the time to come.

Absalom, finding himself now more at liberty to pursue his ambitious schemes, resolved to secure the crown by the most unnatural and criminal measures, namely, either by forcing his father to admit him to a share in the government during his own life, or, by an impious rebellion, to deprive him both of his life and crown, if he could not secure the kingdom without it. Soon after his reconciliation with his father he took on him the state of the king's eldest son and heir, prepared himself a pompous equipage of chariots and horses, and was attended by a guard of fifty men, who were to run before him whenever he appeared in public. To ingratiate himself with the people, he rose early in the morning, that he might have the fewer to observe his conduct, and placing himself in the way that led to the king's palace gate, if he saw any person that had a suit depending going to the king for his determination in the affair, Absalom familiarly called to him, and said; *Of what city art thou?* when the person informed him that he was of such a city, belonging to such a tribe, Absalom said, *Be sure that the business on which you come is fair and just, tho' I am sorry to tell you, there is no person deputed from the king to hear you;* adding, the more effectually to gain their esteem, and to instill an ill opinion into them of the negligence of his father's government, if any one could procure him to be made a judge in the land, that every one who had any suit or cause

depending and came before him, he would immediately hear and do him justice; hereby tacitly reproaching his father for not advancing him to the seat of justice, and thereby defrauding his people of the services he was able and disposed to do them. Whenever any person came to pay his respects to him as the king's son, he took him by the hand, and familiarly embraced and kissed him, in token of his great regard and affection for him. This was his behaviour to all that came to the king for the decision of their causes, whatever tribe they belonged to; by which means he wound himself into the affection and esteem of many of the people, weakened their loyalty to the king, and prepared them to join with him, and support him in his intended usurpation of his father's crown and kingdom,

Having, by these means, secured considerable numbers in his interest amongst all the tribes of Israel, he resolved to put in execution the impious scheme he had projected; a scheme in which he was assisted and encouraged by Ahithophel, David's chief counsellor, and probably in revenge for the injury done to Bathsheba, who was daughter to Eliam, the son of Ahithophel. In order to accomplish his design, Absalom masked his treason with the pretence of piety. He told the king he had made a vow whilst he continued at Geshur, that if God would please to bring him again to Jerusalem, he would offer to him a solemn sacrifice of thanksgiving at Hebron: he therefore entreated permission to go thither to perform the vow he had made, upon which the king, not having any suspicion of his disloyalty and treasonable intentions, readily gave him leave, and wished him prosperity.

Absalom, having thus obtained permission from his father to go to Hebron, took his leave, and prepared himself for the journey. But, previous to his departure, he sent his emissaries, whom he had drawn into the conspiracy, to all the principal towns and cities of the tribes of Israel, ordering them, upon a signal given (namely, the sound of a trumpet) to proclaim him king, and to repair, with all the forces they could collect, to his standard at Hebron.

When Absalom left Jerusalem under the pretence of offering a sacrifice, he invited two hundred men, probably some of the principal citizens, to go with him and partake of the feast. They attended him out of respect as the king's eldest son, but without the least knowledge of his intentions, or any thoughts of joining him in the unnatural conspiracy against his father: and as they were persons of integrity, and attached to David and his government, their waiting on Absalom to partake of his sacrifice at Hebron could not create any suspicion in the king of his son's treasonable design. However, the attendance of such a body of respectable persons from the capital could not but add some credit to the cause, and greatly encourage the conspirators, who would naturally imagine they were Absalom's friends, and disposed to countenance and support him in all his measures. This step was probably taken by Ahithophel's advice, not only to prevent any jealousy that might have arisen in David's mind of his son's treachery, but to deprive him of the assistance of such a large

number of his friends, by drawing them from the city, and when in his power, seducing them by fraud, or forcing them by threats, to join in the conspiracy at Hebron, and thus to propagate the belief that the disaffection to David was general even in Jerusalem itself, which would not fail to receive Absalom, as soon as he should have forces sufficient to appear before it.

Soon after Absalom arrived at Hebron he sent for Ahithophel, who came from Giloh, the city where he lived, while the sacrifices were offering. The presence of Ahithophel greatly encouraged the conspirators, the number of whom continually increased from the daily resort of those whom Absalom's emissaries had corrupted among all the tribes of Israel. Some of the friends of David, who were with Absalom at Hebron, dispatched a messenger to Jerusalem, to inform him, that Absalom had gained the affections of great numbers of the people, throughout all the tribes of Israel, that they had proclaimed him king, and would soon march to take possession of the capital.

When David received this intelligence, not having a sufficient number of forces about him to defend the city against the rebel army, he summoned all his attendants that were with him in Jerusalem, and said to them, Let us immediately make our escape, to prevent our falling into the hands of Absalom; lest he come on us suddenly, and surprize us in the city, and put us and all the inhabitants to the sword. They answered, they were all ready to obey his orders, and would follow him whithersoever he should lead them. He immediately departed from the city on foot, attended by all his family, (except ten of his inferior wives whom he left behind to take care of the palace) his household, and a great number of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The whole body of his guards marched on each side of him, for the protection of his person, and the Cherethites, Pelethites, and Gittites†, went before to prevent any surprize.

After proceeding some way from the city, David, seeing Ittai, the Gittite, (who attended him with his followers out of gratitude for the protection that had been given him as an exile from his native country) was greatly surprized at so distinguished an instance of his affection and fidelity, and therefore addressed him in words to this effect: "Why, said he, should you run any hazard by attending me? you had better return to your house at Jerusalem, and abide with Absalom, who will give you no disturbance, as he knows you are a stranger and an exile from your own country. As you came but a very short time ago to Jerusalem, you are under no obligations to accompany me in my wanderings. I must go where I can find a retreat, and Providence will direct me; but I desire you not to expose yourself on my account. Return, and take your friends and followers with you, and God reward the affection and fidelity you have shewn me." But Ittai generously replied, *As the Lord liveth, and*

as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.

David, finding Ittai resolute in his determinations, ordered him to pass over the brook Kidron, which he immediately did with all his followers, and the little ones that were with him. After him passed David's attendants, and last of all, the king himself, making their way towards the wilderness; and as they passed along the people of the country, seeing their king forced into exile by an ungrateful and unnatural son, expressed their grief by the loudest lamentations.

After David had passed the brook Kidron, he was joined by Zadok the priest, and all the Levites, who brought with them the Ark of the Covenant of God, in order to encourage the king by having this emblem of the Divine Presence with him, and that he might the more readily consult it in every exigence of his affairs. They set it down where the king halted; but David no sooner saw it, than he ordered Zadok to carry it back, expressing his piety and resignation to the will of God in words to this effect: "If, said he, God is pleased to favour me with his protection, and deliver me from mine enemies, he will bring me back again to Jerusalem, that I may see the Ark, and revisit his habitation. But if it should be his pleasure to reject me, as one whom he no longer approves and favours, here I am, I submit to his pleasure, let him do to me as seemeth good to him."

As David was well acquainted with Zadok's fidelity, sagacity and prudence, he determined to make the best use of it he could to his own advantage; and therefore said to him, "As thou art a seer, a man of intelligence and wisdom, go quickly back to Jerusalem, and take Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar, along with you, and I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, near the passage over Jordan, till I am certified by you of what passeth in the city." On this, Zadok and Abiathar carried back the Ark to Jerusalem, where they continued till the rebellion was entirely suppressed.

After David had thus prudently provided for receiving the necessary intelligence from the city, he proceeded some way farther in the wilderness, and going up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, the sense of his danger, the apprehension of God's displeasure which he knew he had deserved, and the thoughts that a son he so tenderly loved should act so unnatural a part, cut him to the quick, and drew tears from his eyes. He travelled as a mourning penitent, with his head covered and his feet bare; and all that attended him wept with him, and covered their heads as he did, thus proving to him their affection, and how deeply they shared in his afflictions.

When David had reached the summit of Mount Olivet, he received information that Ahithophel was engaged in the conspiracy, and had joined his

† These Gittites were the 600 men who had followed David's fortune from Gath. They were headed by one Ittai, a Gittite, who had been a short time before obliged to quit

Gath, on account of his attachment to David, and who, as well as the 600 men, had embraced the Jewish religion.

his son Absalom; upon which he saw his danger in all its strength. An hot-headed young man, high in vanity, extravagant in hope, and easily overfet with success, was not an object of much terror to a man of David's great experience and consummate wisdom; but the prowess, popularity, and numbers of such a man, conducted by the calm skill and prudence of an Ahithophel, was sufficient matter of just fear. David, however, sunk not under it; but had recourse, as usual, to the protection of that God, who only could relieve him, and who had never failed him in distress; beseeching him to confound and infatuate the counsel of Ahithophel. *O Lord, said he, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.*

Ahithophel was one of those prime politicians, as they are deemed, who are often accounted wiser than others, merely because they are more wicked. David well knew that the evil course, in which Ahithophel was embarked, could only be conducted by evil measures, and therefore it was a duty of true religion to beseech God to confound his counsels; and it pleased God, after he had finished his devotions, to furnish him at that moment with the means of effecting what he prayed for. Hushai, the Archite, (so called from Archi, which was in the half tribe of Manasseh. See Joshua xvi. 2.) David's friend, came that instant to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head, intending to accompany him in his flight. As Hushai was famous in the cabinet, but unpractised in the camp, David's good genius immediately suggested to him the most probable method of defeating the devices of Ahithophel by means of this friend, whom he addressed in words to this effect: "If thou goest along with me, (said he) it will be a real inconvenience rather than any advantage to me: you may serve me more essentially by returning to the city, and making your court to Absalom. Tell him, that as you have been his father's servant, you would now become his, by which means you may counteract and defeat the measures advised by Ahithophel. And as you will be able to inform yourself of what passes in the palace, you can acquaint Zadok and Abiathar the priests with it, who will send their two sons to bring me the intelligence you shall give them." Hushai, who was David's sincere friend, returned immediately to Jerusalem, whither he had no sooner arrived than he found Absalom had already taken possession of the city.

When David had proceeded some little distance from Mount Olivet, he was met by Ziba, the steward of Mephibosheth, who brought him a liberal supply of provisions on two asses, consisting of two hundred loaves of bread, an hundred bunches of raisins, an hundred summer-fruits, and a vessel of wine. David, surprized to see Ziba with so large a quantity of provisions, asked him what he intended by it? Ziba told him, the asses were for the use of the king's household, the bread and summer-fruits for his servants to eat, and the wine to refresh and support those who might be faint through fatigue, and the difficulties they might meet with in the wilderness. David then asked him where his master, Jonathan's son, was? To which he replied, *He abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To-day shall the house of*

Israel restore me to the kingdom of my father. Upon this David immediately revoked his grant to Mephibosheth: saying to Ziba, "Behold, all that pertained to Mephibosheth is thine."

As David was proceeding farther into the wilderness, he was met by one Shimei, of the tribe of Benjamin, and of the family of the house of Saul. This person followed David for some way, cursing him as he went after him, and proceeded to such violence and outrage, as to cast stones at David, and all the people, and all the mighty men that were on his right hand and on his left. In the fury of his passion, and in his curses he threw out upon the king, he said, *Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial. The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned: and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son. Behold thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man.* It was no wonder that such an infamous and malicious insult upon the king should excite the indignation of his officers; for Abishai, one of his generals, asked leave to take off the head of this insolent reviler. But David, who considered Shimei's curses as part of the chastisement of his own sins, and permitted by the Providence of God for this purpose, forbade Abishai to intermeddle with the affair, and calmly said: *Let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so? God hath given him permission to curse me; I therefore patiently submit to it, and give him full leave to vent all his reproaches against me. Behold, my own son, who came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life. How much more this Benjamite! Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be, that the Lord will look on my distress, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing me this day.* An answer, which, as it shews David's high reverence for God, and the consciousness, that all Shimei's reproaches were undeserved, so does it demonstrate the generosity of his temper, and his humble hope that God would reward him for his patient submission to the punishment allotted him.

Shimei, growing bolder by David's forbearance, continued his curses on him as he marched on with his followers, threw stones at him, and endeavoured to cover him with dust. But David bore all his insults with the greatest patience, and continued his retreat till he came to Bahurim, a town belonging to the tribe of Ephraim, where he halted, his people being greatly fatigued and consequently wanting refreshment.

A short time after David had left Jerusalem, Absalom and the rebel army took possession of it, accompanied by Ahithophel, his chief counsellor. The advice of this person was thought by the people to be almost as infallible as if it had been received from the very Oracle of God, and he himself was, on that account, in the highest esteem both with David and Absalom.

Among others who paid their compliments to Absalom, after his arrival at Jerusalem, was Hushai, David's friend, who, when he approached him, said, *God save the king.* Absalom, who knew the intimacy between David and him, (with an unparalleled effrontery, and too hardened

hardened to feel how much more severely he reproached himself for his ungrateful and unnatural conduct towards his own father by his answer) said to Hushai, with an air of contempt and indignation, *Is this thy kindness to thy friend? Why wentest thou not with thy friend?* Hushai, to exculpate himself from the charge of ingratitude, and prevent Absalom's suspecting him of insincerity, replied, *Whom the Lord, and this people, and all the men of Israel chose, his will I be, and with him will I abide*; as I prefer the appointment of God, and the general choice of the whole nation, to the interests of any private friendship whatever. Besides, added Hushai, upon the same principle, *Whom should I serve? Should I not serve in the presence of his son?* To approve my friendship to the father, as I have been a faithful servant to him whilst he was in possession of the kingdom, I will now enter into the service of his son, since the kingdom is transferred to him. *As I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.* Absalom, pleased with the seeming frankness of Hushai's answer, readily admitted him among the number of his friends; bidding them go and consult together what was to be done.

The time was now come when that dreadful part of Nathan's threats from God to David were to be fulfilled; *I will take thy wives and give them to thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of the sun.* To this execrable measure Absalom was advised by Ahithophel, in order to cut off all possibility of a reconciliation between father and son, and render Absalom's adherents more firm to his cause, and desperate in his defence, as their own safety, after having aided and abetted so infamous a rebellion, depended on their courage and resolution in making it successful. *All Israel shall know that thou art abhorred of thy father, and then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong.*

Absalom, without fear or shame, immediately perpetrated the wickedness to which he had been advised by his dissolute and abandoned counsellor Ahithophel; and on the house top, and in the sight of all the people, committed a crime, which, had there been any remains of conscience or decency in him, he would have shuddered at the very thought of being guilty of in the most secret retirement.

Ahithophel, having thus prevailed on his graceless pupil to abuse his father by open incest, next advises him to make sure work by murdering him. He offered himself to accomplish his destruction, and that by a method which, had it been followed, must, in all human probability, have proved fatal to David. "Let me," says he, choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise, and pursue after David this night, and I will come upon him while he is weary and weak-handed, as having but few forces to defend him, and I will make him afraid, by so unexpected an attack, and smite the king only. The man whom thou seekest is as if all returned, so all the people shall be in peace."

This advice at first pleased Absalom, and all the elders of Israel who had joined with him; But, as he thought Hushai was now firmly in his interest, he was willing to have his opinion

also. Accordingly, Hushai being sent for, and informed of Ahithophel's scheme, he immediately condemned it. *The counsel, said he, that Ahithophel hath given is not good at this time.* He then remonstrated with them to this effect: "As to thy father and his men, said he, thou knowest that they are men of valour, and exasperated and enraged as a bear in a field robbed of her whelps, and will not, as Ahithophel thinks, be easily put to flight, but, whenever they are attacked, will make a desperate resistance. As to thy father, he is too well versed in the arts of war to trust himself in his present situation, to the open field, and it will be a very difficult matter for Ahithophel to find him; for after having rightly disposed his troops, he will conceal himself in some cavern, or other place of security, where he will be out of the reach of his pursuers. And when the forces that are with him, by their furious resistance to those who attack them, shall make some slaughter among Absalom's men, the report of it will soon spread throughout Ahithophel's whole party, and strike them with a panick, and thus utterly dishearten even the stoutest and strongest of them, even though their hearts were as intrepid as that of a lion, especially as they dread thy father's bravery and courage. For it is well known to all Israel, that thy father is a brave and experienced soldier, and the troops that are with him are all valiant men, and worthy the great commander under whom they serve. My advice therefore is, that thou gather all Israel to thee from Dan to Beersheba, from one end of the kingdom to the other, and that thou put thyself in person at the head of them, and inspire them with courage by thine own example. By these means, we shall come upon him, wherever he retreats, and as the ground is covered over with the drops of morning dew, overpower him with our numbers, whereby our victory will be certain and easy, and we shall utterly destroy him, and all his forces, so that there shall not one of them be left. Or if, with his followers, he shall shut himself up within some fortified city, as we have all Israel with us, we shall be able entirely to demolish it, and with our tackle to draw along the stones of it into the ditches that surround it, so that there shall be none remaining in it."

The advice given by Hushai was very plausible, and the arguments he drew from David's known courage and military skill, the bravery of his soldiers, and the pannick David's men would create in Absalom's troops on their first encounter, carried some degree of probability in them. Besides, the gathering all Israel together, and Absalom's putting himself at the head of them, and thereby utterly crushing David and his men in the field, or destroying them in the ruins of any town where he might retreat with them, seemed to be a surer method than Ahithophel's, who, if he had failed in his attempt of surprizing and cutting off David, would have entirely ruined Absalom's affairs; whereas the forces of all Israel under Absalom's command could not fail, as Hushai had observed, of utterly cutting off David and his men, whereby Absalom

Abfalom would be firmly settled in the kingdom without farther opposition.

The plan recommended by Hushai was not only approved of by Abfalom, but the greater part of the council, and a resolution was formed of carrying it into immediate execution. This plan was almost the only one that could have preserved David. It gave him time to recruit his army, to refresh his harassed followers, to recover them from their consternation and terror, and to take all proper measures, as the circumstances of his affairs might require; *for the Lord had appointed to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Abfalom, or that punishment which was due to him for those unnatural and aggravated crimes of which he had been guilty.*

As soon as Hushai left the council, he immediately repaired to Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, to whom he related all that had passed; and informed them of what Ahithophel had advised, and himself had counselled. He then desired them immediately to send information to David, and earnestly entreat him to depart that very night from the plains of the wilderness where he then was, and instantly to pass over Jordan, lest Abfalom with his army should suddenly surprize him, and he should be cut off with all his people.

Jonathan and Ahimaaz, the priests sons, had concealed themselves at a place called Enrogel, near the city, not venturing to enter it for fear of being discovered; and here they waited for instructions from their fathers, as had been previously agreed on between them. To avoid all suspicion the priests sent the instructions to their sons by a trusty girl, which they had no sooner received, than they immediately set out to communicate them to David. After travelling some way they were observed by two of Abfalom's party, whom they soon found to be in pursuit of them. In consequence of this they went out of their road to the habitation of a poor woman, who (after being informed who they were and the nature of their business) in order to conceal them, let them down into a well, the mouth of which she covered with ground corn. When the pursuers arrived they asked the woman if she had not seen two men lately pass that way; to which she replied in the affirmative, and said, if they were expeditious they might soon overtake them. They accordingly went some way farther, but not seeing any thing of the people they were after, they gave over the pursuit, and returned, to the woman's house, in their way to Jerusalem. As soon as the woman found all was safe she assisted her guests in getting out of the well, and they prosecuted their journey with the greatest expedition. When they arrived at the camp of David they immediately delivered to him their dispatches; upon which, taking the opportunity of the night, he, with all his followers, passed the river Jordan, so that by day-break there was not one left behind, and, pursuing his march, arrived safe at Mahanaim.

In the mean time the advice given by Hushai was strictly followed by Abfalom and his council, which was no sooner known by Ahithophel than he gave up all for lost. He immediately saddled his ass, went home to his house and city,

settled his family affairs, and then hanged himself through disappointment, rage, and despair.

— This was a death worthy the wretch that had betrayed his prince's counsels, excited a civil war in the kingdom, had been the author of such execrable advice, and hurried on an ambitious son to such impious violations of an affectionate father's honour, and such unnatural attempts on his life and kingdom.

Whilst David continued at Mahanaim he received plentiful supplies of provisions and other articles from Shobi, the son of Nahash the Ammonite, who came from Rabbah, the principal city of that country, and whom David had made king there instead of Hanun his eldest brother, whom he had cut off for ill treating his ambassadors, and endeavouring to support and vindicate that injury by an unrighteous war. David likewise received considerable presents from Barzillai, the Gileadite, as also from Machir the son of Ammiel of Ladebar, who had taken care of Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, after his father had fell in battle with Saul. All these were persons of great property, and the articles they brought to David consisted of beds, basons, and earthen vessels; wheat, barley, flour, parched corn, beans, lentils, parched pulse, honey, butter, sheep, and cheese of kine: in short, they brought with them every necessary that could be wished for the convenience and support of the army.

This was certainly a very seasonable relief to David and his men, after their long and fatiguing march from Jerusalem, and in a country where he had reason to think many of the inhabitants might be disaffected to him, in favour of the house of Saul. By these means he had time to collect his friends, to recruit his forces, and gather such an army as might enable him to crush the rebellion, and secure his restoration to his throne and capital.

In the mean time Abfalom was far from being deficient in his endeavours to maintain by force what he had gained by impiety and treachery. Agreeable to Hushai's advice, he made levies throughout all the tribes of Israel, and having gathered together a very considerable army, appointed Amasa, cousin-german to Joab (the latter of whom had continued faithful to David) captain of his host, to command under him. Every thing being ready, Abfalom left Jerusalem, and marching his army across the river Jordan, went with all expedition in pursuit of his father, and encamped in the land of Gilead, nor far from the royal army.

David was prepared to meet the forces of his rebellious son. He made a general muster of all his men, and having formed them into regiments and companies, and set proper officers over them, he divided the whole into three parts. One division he put under the command of Joab, the second under Abishai, and the third under his faithful friend Ittai, the Gittite. David intended to have accompanied his forces in the field of battle, but the people would not permit him to hazard his person in the engagement. They told him it was not so much their lives as his that Abfalom sought after, and that if half of them perished, it would signify little while he remained alive: that his destruction would be of more consequence to Abfalom, and give him

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greater pleasure, than the slaughter of ten thousand of his forces. They therefore thought it more adviseable that he should continue in the city with a body of his troops for the security of it, and that if he found the army likely to be conquered by the rebels he should then suddenly fall out with them, and march to their assistance.

David acquiesced with the advice of his people, and as his forces marched out of the gate of the city, he stood by the side of it, viewing them as they passed, and no doubt (as Josephus says) exhorted them to behave with courage and resolution in the engagement. But though David, no doubt, was desirous of quelling this horrid rebellion, yet, at the same time, he could not help dreading the fate that might attend the author of it, for whom he had still the most tender affection. When, therefore, the three generals, Joab, Abishai and Ittai, took leave of him, he commanded them, in the hearing of all the people, that in case Absalom should fall into their hands, they would, for his sake, spare not only his life, but treat him in a manner consistent with the dignity of a royal captive. *Deal gently,* said he, *for my sake, with the young man, even with Absalom.*

Soon after the royal army took the field, the engagement began, which seems to have been a very obstinate one; David's men, as Josephus well observes, exerting their courage to restore their dethroned prince, and Absalom's soldiers to support his usurpation, and save him and themselves from the punishment they so richly deserved. The issue of the battle was in David's favour, the rebel army being intirely routed, with the loss of twenty thousand men. It was fought near the wood of Ephraim, which was on the rear of David's army, where, when Absalom's forces gave way, it is probable that a large body of them retreated into the wood from the pursuit of Joab's troops, who there destroyed them in great numbers, as they were in their confusion incapable of making any regular defence; inso-much that, as the sacred historian observes, there were more slaughtered in the wood, than in the open field, where the engagement began.

When Absalom found the battle was lost, he endeavoured to save himself by flight; but meeting with some of David's men, and endeavouring to ride from them through a thick part of the wood, his mule carried him under a large oak, where his head and hair were so entangled in the thick boughs of it that he could by no means extricate himself, and being thus caught hold of, his mule passed from under him, and he was left hanging on the tree *between the heaven and the earth.*

In this situation was Absalom found by one of the soldiers belonging to David's army, who

telling it to Joab, he greatly blamed him for not having instantly put him to death. "Why," said he, "didst thou not smite him to the ground? I would have rewarded thee with ten pieces of silver, and a military girdle." The soldier answered him in words to this effect: "Could I, said he, have received a thousand pieces of silver, I would not have killed the king's son; for, in the hearing of all the people the king charged thee, and Abishai, and Ittai, to take care that no violence should be offered to Absalom; and had I done it, it could not have been concealed from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have been one of the first to have demanded my punishment; and, by disobeying the king's orders, I should have justly deserved it."

In answer to this, Joab told the soldier he had something else to do than to stand debating with him; and immediately, in contempt of the king's order, went to the oak where Absalom was hanging, and stabbed him to the heart with three darts; after which ten of his guards finished the tragedy by cutting him to pieces. They then took down his mangled body, threw it into a great pit in the wood, and covered it with a large heap of stones.

Absalom had, some time before his death, erected a large pillar in a place called the King's Dale, in order to perpetuate his memory †, he having no son to keep up his name. It was called Absalom's Pillar, and continued for a great number of years after his death. But though that pillar hath, for many ages, been entirely lost, yet he hath erected to his own infamy, by the enormous and unparrelled crimes he was guilty of, a standing monument, which will be preserved entire, in the faithful records of history, till time shall be no more.

We cannot, however, help making some few reflections on the conduct of Joab to Absalom, after having received strict orders from the king not to take away his life. He was probably influenced to destroy Absalom through a spirit of revenge for his having burnt down his field of corn, and for abusing the friendship he had shewn him in introducing and reconciling him to the king his father. However, we cannot help thinking that his killing him in the manner he did was nothing less than a cruel and deliberate murder; for though Absalom had certainly well deserved to die and had he been slain in battle would have met with his just deserts, yet Joab had no right to put him to death, as he had the king's positive orders to spare him, and might have taken him prisoner, if his desire of revenge had not taken place of his duty; and therefore, by destroying him, Joab added treason to murder.

After Joab had entirely routed the rebel army,

† The sacred writer mentions this particular, not only to shew the vanity of Absalom, but, we may reasonably conclude, still farther to shew the vanity of human life in general. Absalom, having lost his sons (mentioned in 2 Sam. xiv. 27.) and being desirous to perpetuate his memory, had erected a pillar, which, no doubt, he designed as a mausoleum or burying-place, and which, it is reasonable to imagine, was equally magnificent with the ambition of him who reared it. But see how short-sighted are mortals. The same

Absalom, so far from being buried in this proud monument which he had erected, was killed and buried like a traitor, thrown into a pit, and covered with no other monument than an heap of stones. The *King's Dale* (mentioned also in Gen. xiv. 17.) was near Jerusalem, and to this day there is a monument shewn to travellers, called Absalom's pillar; but it is evidently of modern date. In the time of Josephus the original structure was nothing more than a single marble pillar.

army, and, by cutting off Absalom, prevented any farther attempt and insurrection against David, he immediately founded a retreat, and recalled his victorious troops from their pursuit after the enemy. Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, for whom Joab had a partial esteem, begged of him that he might go to Mahanaim, and acquaint the king with the welcome news, *that the Lord had avenged him of his enemies.* Joab, knowing with what regret David would receive the account of Absalom's death, and being unwilling that Ahimaaz should be the messenger to give him the first intelligence of the event, refused to let him go, but promised that he would send him at another opportunity, and on a more favourable occasion. Then turning to Cush, (probably one of his guards who was with him when he dispatched Absalom) he bid him go and inform the king of the whole affair; upon which Cush, being pleased with the order, immediately ran off to execute the commands of his general. Ahimaaz, however, renewed his request to Joab, that he would permit him to run after Cush: but Joab, being still unwilling to employ him on so melancholy an occasion, said to him, "Why, my son, wouldest thou run after him, since thou canst carry the king no news but what Cush will inform him of?" But Ahimaaz still persisting in his request, Joab at length granted it; upon which he immediately set off by the way of the plains, and, being either swifter of foot than Cush, or knowing a nearer way, arrived first at Mahanaim.

David, who was undoubtedly solicitous to know the event of the battle, and the fate of his son, was sitting between two of the gates of the city, expecting every moment a courier from the army. As soon as Ahimaaz came in sight, the centinel, who was on the watch-tower over the gate, cried out, and informed the king, that he saw a man running alone; on which the king said, if he be alone, he is an express from the army. Soon after the centinel told the porter, he saw a second person running alone, (Ahimaaz being somewhat nearer,) and that, as far as he could guess, at that distance, the foremost ran like Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok. This was agreeable news to the king, who immediately said, *Ahimaaz is a good man, and cometh with good tidings.* Soon after, presenting himself before David, he told him: *All is well;* and then, prostrating himself, added, *Blessed be the Lord thy God, who hath delivered up to destruction the men that took up arms against my Lord the king.* David immediately asked if the young man Absalom was safe? Ahimaaz told him, that when he, and the other courier were sent off by Joab,

he saw a great tumult, but knew not the occasion of it. The king then bid him rise up, and pointed to the place where he would have him stand. Soon after Cush arrived, and said to the king, *Good tidings for my Lord the king; for the Lord hath now avenged thee of all them that rose up in arms against thee.* The king eagerly replied, Is the young man Absalom safe? Cush, in a tender and delicate manner, said, *May the enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as the young man is!* This news greatly affected David, who immediately withdrew into one of the apartments over the gate of the city, weeping as he went, and crying out, *O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!*

Joab was soon informed of the king's distress, and immediately repaired to his apartment, where, (instead of apologizing for his own conduct, or sympathizing with his sovereign in the bitterness of his grief, and tenderly laying before him the ill consequences that might at that time have attended it) he, with an unparalleled insolence, thus addressed him §: "Thou hast, said he, this day shamed the faces of all thy servants, which have this day saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons, and daughters, and wives, and concubines, in that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants; for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well. Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably to thy servants; for I swear by the Lord, if thou go not forth, there shall not tarry one with thee this night; and that will be worse unto thee, than the evil that befel thee from thy youth until now."

Sure nothing can be conceived in more imperious and haughty terms than this remonstrance! More injurious to the king, or false in its nature! It was plainly justifying to his face the murder of his son. It was, in fact, telling him that, as he was above his reach, and fearless of his displeasure, he would not appear to justify the murder of his son, and him who was the author of it.

David was at this time too much in the power of Joab to refuse his imperious orders. He therefore appeared in public, and as soon as the people were informed of it, they came to congratulate him on the occasion; as also to wish him joy on the great success he had obtained over his rebellious subjects.

CHAP.

§ The words Josephus puts into Joab's mouth on this occasion, is to the following effect: "My lord, said he, you dishonour yourself by this ridiculous and effeminate lamentation. It appears as if you detested the very people who have preserved your life at the hazard of their own; and that you respect those mortal enemies who have suffered a punishment they justly deserved. If Absalom had overcome us, and possessed himself of the kingdom, he would have begun his vengeance on you and your family, and the whole of us should have fallen in an undistinguished ruin. Both your conscience and your honour ought to check you for this intemperate tenderness for the

"memory of so implacable an enemy. 'Tis true he was your son, but he was certainly a most ungracious one; and you cannot be just to God's Providence, without acknowledging the blessing of his being taken away. Let me therefore beg that you will immediately shew yourself cheerfully to your people, and tell them that, next under God, it is owing to their loyalty and courage you are indebted for the honour of this day. If you persist in your lamentations, your army and kingdom will fall into other hands, and then you will have just cause to weep and lament your absurd conduct."

C H A P. XII.

David's restoration and return to Jerusalem. Is reconciled to Shimei, and returns Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, his possessions, which he had bestowed on Ziba, the steward of Mephibosheth. His gratitude to Barzillai. Sheba raises an insurrection, upon which David sends Amasa, his general, against him, who is treacherously wounded by Joab. Sheba's rebellion suppressed. The Israelites are afflicted with a famine, on account of Saul's slaughter of the Gibeonites. David gives up seven of Saul's descendants, who are hanged on Gibbets erected for the purpose, after which the famine ceases. David engages the Philistines and conquers them. Composes a psalm of thanksgiving on the occasion. Account of David's Worthies. David numbers the people, for doing of which he incurs the Divine displeasure, and on that account the Israelites are afflicted with a dreadful pestilence. David humiliates himself before God for his transgression, and, by order of the prophet Gad, erects an altar on the occasion, and offers up sacrifices, upon which the plague ceases.

THE defeat of Absalom, and the extinction of the rebellion under him, was no sooner known among the tribes of Israel, by the flight of those who had escaped out of the battle to their respective places of abode, than David's friends, who were very numerous through all the kingdom, used the proper methods to bring over to their duty all those who had been engaged in, or favoured the rebellion. To effect this they reminded the people, that David had, by his victories, delivered them out of the hands of their enemies, particularly the Philistines; and yet, notwithstanding these eminent services, he had been forced to abandon his capital, and flee out of the land, at the instigation of Absalom, his son, who had been advanced to the kingdom in his stead. But that, as Absalom was now dead, there could be no reason for their delaying to return to their allegiance to David, and coming to an unanimous resolution of bringing him back to Jerusalem, and restoring him to his throne and government.

These representations had their proper effect, inasmuch that the different tribes were eagerly desirous of recalling him from his banishment, and re-establishing him in the kingdom; his friends out of affection and loyalty to him, and those who had joined Absalom in his rebellion, to atone for their crimes, and more effectually to secure their pardon.

David, who continued for some time at Mahanaim after his victory, waiting to see what effect the news of it would have upon the people, received the agreeable intelligence, that they were in general disposed in his favour, and were concerting measures for his restoration. But as the tribe of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, had not yet shewn any disposition to return to their obedience, nor sent him any invitation to take possession of the city, he wrote to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, desiring them to repair to, and expostulate with, the elders of Judah in these words: *Why are ye the last to bring the king*

back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, even to his house. Ye are my brethren, my bones and my flesh. Wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king? He likewise sent a particular message to Amasa, the rebel general: *Say ye to Amasa, Art thou not of my bone and of my flesh? that is, of my own family, and my near relation? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually, in the room of Joab.*

This part of David's conduct was exceeding prudent and necessary. The tribe of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, were under the command of Amasa, who was peculiarly guilty, as he had headed the rebellion under Absalom, and had great reason to fear David's resentment; and who certainly would have kept possession of Jerusalem, and continued the spirit of disaffection to the king, had he not been assured of indemnity both for himself and his adherents. David, therefore, well knowing the importance of the tribe of Judah, and of Amasa, who had seized the city, and garrisoned it with a strong body of troops, thought it absolutely necessary to regain the affections and recover their interest. To effect this, without mentioning a single word of the rebellion, he only puts them in mind that he was of their own tribe, and gently reproaches them for being the last, who should have been the first, of the tribes to obtain his restoration. As for Amasa, he first compliments him on being his near relation, and then assures him that he should be captain-general of his army instead of Joab. The prudence of this conduct immediately appeared by its effects: for he, that is, Amasa, *loved the hearts of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man*; and in return for his great generosity and goodness to them, they immediately sent a deputation to invite David, and all his servants to Jerusalem.

Amasa, and the tribe of Judah, being thus gained over, and all the other tribes appearing well disposed in favour of David, he resolved to set

|| With respect to the promise made by David to Amasa of placing him in Joab's room, the prudence of it will plainly appear, if we consider that Joab and Amasa stood in the same degree of consanguinity: the offer, therefore, must

have been influenced by the personal qualities of the man, the importance of gaining him over (he being a person of great power and authority) and a resentment against Joab for the murder of Abner, and the assassination of Absalom.

set out immediately on his return to Jerusalem. He was accompanied by a great number of people belonging to the different tribes in whose country he had resided during the rebellion; as also by the deputies from Judah, who assured him that the whole tribe, would, in a body, assemble at Gilgal, and from thence march to the river, provide every thing necessary for his passage over it, with his servants and attendants, and supply him with all accommodations for his journey to the city.

The whole tribe of Judah attended David as their deputies had told him, and with them went Shimei, who had cursed and thrown stones at the king in his flight, attended with a thousand Benjamites. To shew his extraordinary zeal and joy at David's restoration, he went down to Jordan before the king had passed over it, and before the tribe of Judah could reach it, hoping, no doubt, that by this appearance of his peculiar affection to him, he should atone for his past insolence and treason, and more readily obtain the king's forgiveness.

As soon as David had got on the opposite side the river Jordan, Shimei presented himself before him, fell prostrate at his feet, and, in a very suppliant manner, apologized for his villainous behaviour, recanting all his accusations, acknowledging that he had grievously offended, and humbly imploring forgiveness. "Let not," says he, my lord impute iniquity to me, neither do thou remember what thy servant did perversely, the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to heart. For thy servant doth know that he hath sinned. Therefore behold I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph, to go down to meet my lord the king." Abishai, (moved with a just indignation against a wretch, who first, in the malice of his heart, falsely and virulently abused his sovereign, and attempted to murder him, and then meanly retracted his calumnies to save his life, fearful of being punished like a traitor and regicide as he well deserved) said to the king, "Shall not Shimei be put to death, because he hath cursed the Lord's anointed?" David, though warm, could not be deliberately vindictive; and therefore, being displeased with Abishai's proposal, told him he intermeddled with an affair that did not concern him, and that the prompt-

ing him to revenge himself on Shimei, though it might proceed from zeal in him for his service, was, in reality, the advice of an enemy: that it was exciting him to an unnecessary instance of severity, since his restoration was now happily accomplished, and needed not the death of Shimei, or any other person, to secure it; and that therefore he was resolved no man should be put to death that day in Israel. "What have I to do with you (says he) ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries to me? Shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? For do not I know that I am this day king over Israel?" He then turned to Shimei, and gave him his royal word and oath that no harm whatever should come to him on his account; upon which assurance Shimei made his reverence, and departed.

Another remarkable person who went to wait on David at this time was, the perfidious Ziba, accompanied by his fifteen sons, and twenty servants. He had again imposed upon his master, for, when he ordered him to make ready his ass, that he, among others, might go and meet the king, he slid away himself to make his court first; so that Mephibosheth, being lame, was forced to stay at Jerusalem (where he had all along mourned* for the king's absence) until David arrived: But when he was admitted into his presence, and the king seemed to be angry with him for not having accompanied him in his exile, he charged this *seeming* neglect upon the perfidy of his servant, whose iniquity he so clearly pointed out, and set his own case in so fair a light †, that the king was convinced of the treachery of Ziba, and therefore revoked the hasty grant he had made in his favour, and restored to Mephibosheth those possessions of which he had been divested by the artifices of his perfidious and treacherous servant.

Before David had advanced as far as the river Jordan, in his return to Jerusalem, he was met by another person of distinguished note who came to compliment him on the occasion. This was Barzillai, the Gileadite, who testified his friendship and allegiance to him, during the time of the rebellion, by supplying him and his men with great quantities of provisions during their stay at Mahanaim. After Barzillai had paid the king reverence, David, in gratitude for favours received, gave him an invitation to accompany him

* The words in the text are, that he had not dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day that the king departed, 2 Sam. xix. 24. These were some of the instances, wherein the Jews were accustomed to express their mourning; and they are here mentioned by the historian, as evidences of the falshood of Ziba's information against his master, since no one, who neglected himself to this degree, could be supposed ambitious of a crown. *Not dressing his feet* may signify either not cutting his toe-nails, or his *not washing his feet*, which the Jews were accustomed very frequently to do, because of the bad scent which was natural to them, as well as the Arabians, and some other nations; and therefore his omission of this could not but make him offensive to himself. *Not trimming his beard* was letting his hair grow negligently, and without any order: for the manner of the Jews was, to cut the hair from the lip upwards, and what grew likewise on the cheek, but what was on the chin, and so backwards to the ear, they suffered to grow; and *not washing his clothes* must denote his not putting on clean linen, but wearing the same shirt the whole time.

† The words Josephus puts into Mephibosheth's mouth, when pleading his excuse to David for not attending him, and acknowledging the favours received from the king, are to this effect:—"Nor has he only disappointed me (speaking of Ziba) in the exercise of my duty, but has been doing me spiteful offices to your majesty likewise: But you, Sir, are so just, and so great a lover of God and truth, that I am sure your generosity and wisdom will never entertain a calumny to my prejudice. Our family has had the experience of your piety, modesty and goodness to a degree never to be forgotten, in passing over and pardoning the innumerable hazards and persecutions that you were exposed to in the days and by the contrivance of my grandfather, when all our lives were forfeited, in your power, and at your mercy. But then, after all this gracious tenderness, your superadding the honour of taking me to your table, (a person so obnoxious in regard of my relations) as a friend and as a guest, nothing could be either greater, or more obliging, and for all which I return you my most sincere and grateful acknowledgments."

him to Jerusalem, and at the same time promised that as soon as he arrived there he would liberally provide for him. The good old man answered, *How long have I to live that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? I am this day fourscore years old, and can I discern between good and evil? Have I any relish for the pleasures and enjoyments of a court? Can thy servant taste what I eat, or what I drink? Can I any more hear the voice of singing men and singing women? Wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burthen to my lord the king? Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king; and why should the king recompence it me with such a reward?* hereby acknowledging that the honour he did him by his kind invitation to his court was too great a recompence for the small proofs he had given him of his affection and zeal for his person and government. He then desired the king's permission to turn back again, that he might die in his own city, and be buried by the grave of his father and mother. But that he might not appear to undervalue the king's kind offers, he said, *Behold thy servant Chimham †, let him go over with my lord the king, and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.* David replied, *Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good to thee, and do for him whatsoever thou shalt require of me.* Barzillai accordingly attended the king over the river Jordan, where the king embraced him in the most affectionate manner, wished him all happiness, and sent him highly pleased to his habitation and family.

When David had crossed the river Jordan, he proceeded with all expedition towards Gilgal, attended not only by the whole tribe of Judah, but considerable detachments from half of the other tribes; as also the thousand men with Shimei, of the tribe of Benjamin. When they came to Gilgal they found that the rest of the tribes were come down, in large bodies, to pay their submission to David. These, understanding that the tribe of Judah had been particularly summoned by David to attend him, which none of the other tribes had been, and that upon their single invitation, without waiting for the other tribes, he had resolved to return to Jerusalem, they were incensed to the highest degree, and such a difference arose between the men of Judah and them as occasioned a new rebellion. The Israelites in general thinking the credit of the king's restoration would be fixed on the tribe of Judah alone, thus expostulated with David: *Why, said they, have our brethren the men of Judah, stolen thee away (clandestinely, as it were, taken thee from the rest of their brethren) and have brought the king and his household, and all David's men with him over Jordan?* as though he was their peculiar exclusive property, with whom the rest of the tribes had no share. The men of Judah, without suffering David to interpose, imprudently replied, *Because the king is near of kin to us, as being of our tribe, and*

therefore we have some peculiar interest in him: *Wherefore then be ye angry with us for our being the first to shew our affection to him? especially as we have put the king to no expence for our attendance on him, nor received any gratuity for our zeal in serving him.* This answer farther inflamed the Israelites, who replied, with indignation, "We have ten parts in the king, and "we have also more right in David than ye: "why then did ye despise us, that our advice "should not be first had in bringing back our "king." This the men of Judah treated with contempt, and answered the discontented tribes in so haughty a manner, that they wanted nothing but a leader to head them, to bring about a second revolution, and prevent David's re-settlement on the throne.

Turbulent and factious persons are seldom wanting in cases of public disturbance, and such an one soon appeared among the Israelites. Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite, (who had probably been an officer in the late rebellion, and was of a profligate temper and character) taking advantage of these discontents, immediately blew the trumpet of sedition, and cried out in the midst of the people, *We have no part in David, neither have we any inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to his tent, O Israel.* This was spoken by way of indignation to the claims of the tribe of Judah of a superior interest in David as king. Since you will have it that the king is yours, be it so. We renounce all interest in, and claim to him; and you and the king may go together. Let us return to our camp, O Israel, and provide a king for ourselves.

As the Israelites in general were ever prone to rebellion, this speech of Sheba's took immediate effect. The body of the people deserted David, marched off under Sheba, and probably would have advanced him, or one of Saul's family, to the crown, had not proper measures been immediately taken to quash the defection in its infancy. The tribe of Judah continued faithful to the king, whom they conducted, with all expedition, to his palace at Jerusalem.

As soon as David had taken possession of Jerusalem, and was reinstated in his palace, one of his first cares was, to remove those concubines, or secondary wives, whom Absalom had so scandalously abused. He therefore ordered them to be separated from the palace, and maintained in a proper place of seclusion and retirement, where they were kept the remainder of their lives as widows, without having any future commerce with man. This was certainly a very prudent step taken by David, for had they been permitted to appear again in public, it might have been of bad consequence, at least it would have renewed in the minds of the people the opprobrious infamy of his son, whose faults he was anxiously desirous of burying in oblivion.

The insurrection of Sheba was now become too serious to be neglected. David, therefore, gave orders to Amasa (whom he appointed captain-

† It is generally supposed that Chimham was Barzillai's son. See 1 Kings ii. 7. In Jeremiah xli. 17. there is mention of *the habitation of Chimham*, which was near Bethlehem; and it is reasonable to suppose that David, having a

patrimony in the field of Bethlehem, bestowed it upon this son of Barzillai, from whence the place received the name of Chimham.

tain-general in Joab's stead) to assemble the troops of the tribe of Judah within three days, and to put himself at the head of them, that he might review them in person at Jerusalem. Amasa, by some means or other, did not appear at the time appointed, upon which David, to prevent the inconvenience of any farther delay, and the increase of Sheba's party, ordered Abishai, Joab's brother, to gather together the king's guards, and what other forces he could collect, and immediately pursue Sheba, to prevent him, if possible, from seizing any of the fortified cities for his security. Abishai accordingly took Joab's own regiment, consisting of the Cherethites and Pelethites, together with all the mighty men that were in, or near the city, and marched out of Jerusalem in pursuit of the rebel. Joab attended him though not as general; and when they had got as far as the great rock of Gibeon, they were joined by Amasa, with the men of Judah he had collected, who put himself at the head of the whole as commander in chief.

The garment that Joab wore was girt round him in the military manner, and over it was the belt of his sword, so fastened that the sword hung upon his loins in the scabbard. As Joab went up to Amasa, the sword falling out of the scabbard, he caught it in his left hand, and said to Amasa, *Art thou in health my brother?* immediately after which he took hold of Amasa's beard with his right hand in order to salute him, as was then the custom of the country. Amasa, either not seeing the sword in his left hand, or, because he suspected no treachery, not regarding it, received Joab's salute, when the perfidious wretch instantly plunged his sword into Amasa's body, killed him on the spot, left him weltering in his blood, and then haughtily and treasonably put himself at the head of the army.— This was, as Josephus observes, a very impious and execrable action, thus to murder a relation, who had never injured him out of envy for his being created general, and having an equal share in the king's favour with himself. He had murdered Abner before on the same account: but for that he had a specious pretence, namely, that he did it to avenge the death of his brother Asahel; whereas he had not any excuse whatever for the murder of Amasa.

After Joab had executed this horrid piece of butchery on Amasa, he left one of his servants to stand by the body; and, lest the troops should be at a loss what to do when they saw their general dead, he ordered him to tell them, as they marched by, that whoever was in Joab's interest, and David's faithful friend, they should immediately follow Joab. But when the soldiers saw Amasa wallowing in his blood, they flocked around him, were shocked at the spectacle, and seemed unwilling to follow Joab in the expedition. The officer observing this removed the dead body out of the road into a neighbouring

field, and covered it with a cloth, upon which the people went on after Joab, who was gone before in pursuit of the rebel.

In the mean time Sheba, in order to draw together a considerable army, had marched with his adherents from Gilgal, through all the tribes that lay in his way to Abel-Maacah, a fortified town belonging to the tribe of Naphtali, in the northern part of Judea. Not meeting with that success he had expected, he resolved not to proceed any farther, but, for the present, to secure himself in the town of which he was now possessed.

As soon as Joab understood where Sheba had shut himself up, he immediately marched with his army to the place, whither he had no sooner arrived, than he ordered his men to throw up a sort of rampart against the wall of the city, from whence he battered it in order to beat it down. After making some progress in this business, a prudent woman of the city, getting upon the top of the walls, called to the besiegers, and begged she might be permitted to speak to their general. This being granted, Joab approached the walls within hearing, when the woman addressed him in words to this effect: "It has, says she, been always a custom founded on the law of God, whenever the Israelites came before any city, to offer peace in the first place, even though the inhabitants were of another nation; much more ought it to be done to a people, who are all of the same blood, and the greatest part of them loyal subjects to the king." *I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city, and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?* Joab told her he had not any ill design against the people of the city; all he requested was, that they would deliver up the rebel Sheba, on doing which he would immediately raise the siege, and draw off his army. The woman desired him to desist for a short time, and his request should be complied with: *Behold,* said she, *his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.* The woman then went to the principal people of the city, to whom she related the conference that had passed between her and Joab, and expostulated § with them so forcibly on the great danger they were in, that they immediately seized Sheba, cut off his head, and threw it over the wall to Joab, in the presence of the whole army.

In consequence of this Joab, agreeable to his promise, ordered a retreat to be sounded, and the soldiers dispersed every man to his tent. Having thus put an end to the rebellion, Joab returned to the king at Jerusalem, and was continued in the post of captain-general, which he had usurped after the murder of Amasa.

This circumstance hath occasioned some very severe reflections on David's honour and justice, and he is reproached by some because Joab was continued in the command, and not a single syllable

§ The words Josephus puts into the woman's mouth, on this occasion, is to the following effect: "Will ye, says she, like traitors, suffer your wives and children to perish for the sake of a villain whom none of you know? What has Sheba done for you that can balance the obligations you lay under to David? Or, setting aside all other ar-

guments, how can you be so unreasonable as to suppose that you are able to resist the force of so powerful an army as is even now before you? Be quick in your determination, for on that depends either your safety, or immediate destruction."

lable of any notice taken by David of the murder of Amasa, whom he himself had appointed general; as tho' David had acquiesced in the murder, and confirmed Joab in the command of the army, as the reward of it. But that David did greatly resent this murder of Amasa, is evident from his last advice to Solomon, in which he nobly recommends, and gives it in charge to him, to do justice on that bloody assassin for the murders of Abner and Amasa. David was not now able himself to do it, and Joab was too powerful a subject to be brought to any account. We have seen that he had insolence enough, after Absalom's death, to threaten the king with a new revolt, if he did not do what he ordered him; and after the assassination of Amasa, he usurped, in defiance of his master's appointment, the command of all the forces. They seem to have had an affection for him as a brave and successful general; he had just now restored the quiet of the land, by intirely quelling the insurrection under Sheba, and returned to Jerusalem, without fear of the king, and in defiance of justice, as generalissimo of the army; and continued to assume this rank, not by David's order and inclination, but by his mere acquiescence in a measure that was contrary to his will, but which he was not able, at this time, to set aside.

We come now to a part of David's history and conduct, that hath been, by some, thought exceptionable, though we cannot help thinking it far otherwise, it being an illustrious proof of the generosity of his temper, the regard he paid to his oath to Saul, and the friendship he owed to the memory and family of Jonathan. That the reader may be the better judge of this matter it will be necessary to recapitulate some matters (which we shall do in as concise a manner as possible) that have been already amply mentioned, and which took place while Joshua was leader of the people.

The inhabitants of Gibeon, (a large royal city, which, after the division of the country, was yielded to the tribe of Benjamin) were Amorites by birth and nation; and when the Israelites under Joshua invaded the land of Canaan, the Gibeonites, hearing what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, and fearful of their own safety, fraudulently persuaded the Israelites to enter into a league with them, which was solemnly ratified by a public oath, so that they had the national faith for the security of their lives and properties; for which reason the Israelites, when they came to their cities, and were informed of the fraud, murmured against the princes for ha-

ving made a league with the Gibeonites. The princes, to appease the people, said to them, "We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel, therefore we must not touch them. We will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we swore unto them." They were accordingly spared, but condemned to servitude, and made hewers of wood, and drawers of water, for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord, perpetually, in the place which he should choose, that is, wherever the tabernacle or ark should reside.—See Joshua ix. x. xviii.

But Saul, to ingratiate himself with the people, under the specious pretence of public spirit, and to appear warm and active for the national interest, *sought to slay them, and to destroy them from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel.* He actually put many of them to death, employing those of his own house or family in the execution: this he did in cold blood, in times of peace, when the Gibeonites were unarmed and destitute of assistance; and all in direct violation of the public oath and faith he had given them for their security. His crime was therefore enormous and highly aggravated, laid the nation under the guilt of perjury and murder, and subjected them to the Divine displeasure.

Though the punishment due for the blood which had been thus horribly shed was (for reasons not to be accounted for) postponed for a considerable time, yet it at length took place. Soon after the quelling of Sheba's rebellion the Israelites were afflicted with a most dreadful famine, which continued for three successive years, in the last of which David, moved by so extraordinary a calamity, enquired of the Lord the cause of it, and was answered by the Oracle, that it was for Saul, *and his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites* ||. In consequence of this David sent for some of the principal persons who had escaped the massacre, and said to them, *What shall I do for you? wherewithal shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord?* What satisfaction do you require for the injuries that have been done you? The Gibeonites answered, *We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel.* David then bade them ask what they would have, and their request should be immediately granted. They replied, "The man that consumed us, and that devised against us, that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel; let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord in
" Gibeah

|| The circumstance of Saul's death could be no reason against bringing to justice those of his *bloody house*, who had been the instrument of his cruelty in the destruction of the poor Gibeonites, if any of them were alive after his death, whatever might be the number of years between the commission of the crime, and the inflicting the vengeance it deserved. The reason why the oracle expressly dictated no act of expiation, was because David only enquired for what reason the famine was sent. When this was known, it was so well known that the Gibeonites were to have some proper satisfaction made to them; so that though the oracular answer did not dictate in express words any act of expiation, yet it was of such a nature as that David was immediately led to think of an expiation; for he knew that the *shedding of*

blood was only to be atoned by the *shedding of his or their blood*, on whom the murder was chargeable; so that the oracle did really dictate, though not in words, the necessity of an expiation, by pointing out the crime for which the famine was sent. It is not easy to say when the slaughter of the Gibeonites was committed: the Jews, indeed, pretend, that Saul had taken it into his head, in one of his phrenetic fits of zeal, to cut them all off; but they give us no authority for it. It is therefore generally, and with greater probability, believed to have happened when he slew all the priests and inhabitants of Nob, for the Gibeonites were a kind of servants to the priests, and employed in some of the lowest and most laborious offices.

"Gibeah of Saul, who was chosen of the Lord." David told them their request should be immediately complied with; upon which (sparing Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, and all the male line of Saul*, who had any claim to; or were capable of contending with him for the crown and disturbing him in the possession of it) he delivered to them the two bastard sons of Rizpah, Saul's concubine, and the five sons of Micah, his youngest daughter, by Adriel, the son of Barzillai the Meholathite.

These seven descendants of Saul being delivered into the hands of the Gibeonites, they immediately put them to death, by hanging them on gibbets erected for the purpose; and in this situation it was intended they should continue till there fell rain upon the earth, the want of which had occasioned the famine. Rizpah was so affected at the fate of her two sons, that she had a tent made of sackcloth (pitched near the place where they were executed) for her to live in, that, by the help of her servants, she might keep watch day and night to prevent the birds and beasts from destroying the carcases; and in this situation did she continue till they were taken down and interred.

It is to be observed, to the honour of David, that though he was under the necessity of delivering up some of Saul's family to justice, in order to give satisfaction to the injured Gibeonites, yet he took the first opportunity he could to pay the last tokens of respect that were in his power to the memory of Saul and his unhappy family. As soon as it appeared that the natural cause of the famine was over by the return of the rain, he ordered the bones of Saul and Jonathan (which had been buried near Jabesh-Gilead) to be taken up, and, with the bodies of those who had been hung up by the Gibeonites, interred them honourably in the sepulchre of Kish, Saul's father; whereby he amply testified that so far from having any enmity against Saul's family, he was pleased with the opportunity of shewing respect to his name and memory. This whole account concludes with the following observation of the historian. *And they performed all that the king commanded, and after that God was intreated for the land:* God approved of David's generosity to the family and remains of his enemy, and, as a reward for it, sent prosperity to him and his people.

* David had given Saul his oath, "that he would not cut off his seed after him, nor destroy his name out of his father's house." Had Saul's family committed crimes worthy of death, David's oath would have been no reason against punishing them according to their deserts; and such punishment, if deserved, had been no breach of his oath. If David did not cut off his seed after him, so as to destroy his name out of his father's house, he did not violate his oath to Saul. Now David did not cut off one single person of Saul's family, whose death had a tendency to destroy his name out of his father's house. The seed is always reckoned by the males, and not the females of a family; and the name in a father's house could only be preserved by the male descendants. But David gave up only two bastards, the sons of Rizpah, Saul's concubine, who were not the legal seed of Saul; and five of the sons of his eldest daughter by Adriel, (who could only keep up Adriel's name, and not Saul's;) and hereby observed, without the least violation, his oath to Saul. Not one of the persons he surrendered was capable of succeeding Saul, especially whilst any of the

The calamity of the famine being removed, David's attention was engaged in opposing the Philistines; who, though they had been greatly humbled in the beginning of his reign, having yet some gigantic men among them, again waged war against him. He accordingly marched against them at the head of a very considerable army, and engaging them soon obtained a complete victory, great numbers being slain, and the rest put to flight. But this battle was very near proving fatal to David. One of the Philistines (a man of so large a size that his lance weighed three hundred shekels) seeing him detached from his army, and quite spent, turned short, and suddenly struck him to the ground; but Abishai, the brother of Joab, coming at the precise moment to his relief, not only preserved the king, but killed the Philistine. The whole army were so sensible of the king's danger, and the interposition of Providence for his safety, that they swore he should never, from that time, personally engage in battle, lest his natural courage should involve him in the like or worse misfortunes, by means of which the nation would sustain an irreparable loss, and the people be deprived of those distinguished blessings they had so often experienced under his government†.

Notwithstanding this defeat, the Philistines were still determined to disturb the peace of Israel. Having rallied their scattered forces, they fixed their place of rendezvous in the plain of Gob, upon which David dispatched an army against them, and a battle taking place the Israelites again became victorious. In this expedition, Sibbechai, the Hushathite, a very brave and experienced warrior, acquired great reputation by killing Saph, one of the race of giants, with his own hands.

After this two other battles took place between the army of the Philistines and that of David, both of which terminated in favour of the Israelites. In these battles were slain two of the most gigantic men among the whole race of the Philistines, one of whom was brother to the famous Goliath, who had been slain by David during the reign of Saul. This last conquest quite sickened the Philistines, who disbanded their army, and relinquished all farther thoughts of interrupting the Israelites.

David, having thus overcome his enemies, composed

male branches were alive. Now, at this very time, Mephibosheth, Jonathan's eldest son, dwelt in David's family at Jerusalem; and though lame in his feet, yet he was sound enough to be the father of a son named Micha, who was at this time old enough to have children, and, indeed, had afterwards four sons, from whom descended a numerous posterity, amounting in the whole (sons and grandsons included) to not less than one hundred and fifty. This was undoubtedly a farther proof that David did not violate his oath to Saul in his treaty with the Gibeonites; but, on the contrary, that he took every measure his thoughts could project of strictly preserving it.

† The prohibition of David's going again to battle is thus beautifully expressed by the sacred historian: *Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle that thou quench not the light of Israel.* 2 Sam. xxi. 17. Good kings are, in scripture, called the Light of the people (1 Kings xi. 36) because the beauty and glory, the conduct and direction, the comfort and safety, and welfare of a people, depend on, and are derived from them.

composed a psalm or hymn on the occasion, in which he returned thanks to God for his great protection not only on this, but on all other occasions during his life. This beautiful hymn, which is full of the most grateful acknowledgments to his Divine benefactor, is contained in the 22d chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, and in the 18th among the whole list composed by the immortal Psalmist.

At this time David had about him great numbers of men of the most approved courage and military prowess, thirty-seven of whom he called his mighty men, or Worthies, from their having performed exploits of the most dangerous and surprising nature. Of these we shall only take notice of the actions of five as related by the sacred historian, and from whom a tolerable idea may be formed of the achievements of the rest.

The first of these was Adino, the Eznite, who, in one encounter, broke into the ranks of the enemy, and, with his own hands, laid eight hundred men dead at his feet.

The next was Eleazar, the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who distinguished himself for his great valour and strength in an engagement at which David was present. The Philistines were so numerous that the Israelites gave way and fled; but Eleazar maintained his ground, and encountering the enemy, made such a dreadful slaughter among them, that his sword was in a manner glued to his right hand with their blood. This example of bravery animated the whole army, who immediately rallied their forces, fell on the Philistines, and obtained a compleat victory.

The third was named Shammah, the son of Agee, the Hararite. This champion also, in an engagement with the Philistines, maintained his ground with such courage, after the Israelites had given way, that he put the enemy to flight, and from his distinguished valour was obtained a compleat conquest.—These three heroes, besides the feats already mentioned, performed one of a very singular nature in conjunction, the particulars of which are as follow: The army of the Philistines lay in the valley of Rephaim, between David's camp and Bethlehem, where they had likewise a garrison. David intimated a desire of having some water from the well of Bethlehem, which being heard by these three chiefs, they forced their way through the enemy's camp, and having drawn some water out of the well, returned uninterrupted (the Philistines staring at them with amazement as they

passed) and presented it to the king. When David understood at what price it had been purchased, even at the most imminent hazard of their lives, he would not drink of it, but, giving God thanks for their safety, poured it on the ground as an offering to the Lord.

The fourth of these champions was Abishai, the brother of Joab, who, in one day, slew three hundred of the Philistines with his own hands.

The fifth and last we shall mention was Benaiah, the son of Jehoida. This mighty man was challenged by two brothers, (Moabites) famous for their military exploits, both of whom he engaged at the same time, and laid them dead at his feet. He likewise encountered with an Egyptian, a man of prodigious strength and size. His adversary was well provided with arms, and himself almost defenceless, notwithstanding which he closed with him, wrested his spear from his hands, and killed him with his own weapon. But he performed another achievement still more extraordinary than the former. A lion had fallen into a pit, from whence he could not extricate himself, and there being at the same time a deep snow, the mouth of the pit (which was narrow) was almost closed. The lion, finding himself not likely to effect his escape, set up a most hideous roar, upon which Benaiah, being directed by the noise, went to the place, and immediately descending into the pit, struck the lion so forcibly on the head with his club, that he fell to the ground, and instantly expired.

Such were the exploits performed by these five champions, and the other thirty two were no less distinguished for their great courage and military prowess.

David, whatever was the occasion of it, suddenly took it into his head that he would know the number of his people †, forgetting the command of Moses, who had said, that on such occasion there should be an oblation of half a shekel by the head offered to the Lord. (See Exod. xxx.) He accordingly gave orders to Joab to go through the whole kingdom, and bring him an account of all the people. Go, said he, *through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, and number ye the people.* Joab strongly remonstrated against such a procedure §, and that in a manner more modest than was customary with him; but the king's orders were positive, upon which Joab, assisted by some of the king's principal officers, set out on the expedition. They began on the east side of the river Jordan, went round by the north parts of Canaan, and returned

† The words in the text are, *And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go number Israel and Judah,* 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. But in the original there is no nominative case at all. We find it however supplied in 1 Chron. xxi. 1. where it is said, that *Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.* But then, by the word *Satan*, there is no necessity why we should understand the devil properly so called, because any evil minister, or counsellor, that advised David to number the people, will answer the signification of the word as well: and that there was such counsellor, who prompted David to this action, seems to be implied in these words of Joab: *Now the Lord thy God add unto the people (how many soever they be) an hundred fold, and that the eyes of my Lord the king may see it, but why doth my lord the king*

delight in this thing? 2 Sam. xxiv. 3. Whereby it seems plain, that the matter had been debated in the king's council before, and that, though Joab was one who opposed it, David was more influenced by the persuasion of some other.

§ It is evident that this action of David's was thought a very wrong step, even by Joab himself, who remonstrated against it, being apprehensive of the bad consequences that might attend it: and therefore *Joab counted not Levi and Benjamin,* 1 Chron. xxi. 6. *because the king's word was abominable to him.* It is probable we do not understand all the circumstances of this very singular transaction; but Joab's sense of it (who was no scrupulous man) shews that David's conduct in it was exceeding imprudent, and might subject his people to very great inconveniences.

returned to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. By the estimate Joab brought there appeared to be 800,000 men fit to bear arms, and 500,000 in the tribe of Judah only; exclusive of the tribes of Levi and Benjamin, whom he had not numbered.

David had no sooner received the account of the number of his people than his heart misgave him. He knew he had offended the Almighty in what he had done, and entreated pardon by the most fervent prayers and supplications. *I have sinned, said he, greatly in that I have done: and now I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.*

The next morning the prophet Gad was sent to David with an offer of three things for his choice; namely, a seven years famine; persecution by his enemies for three months; or a pestilence for three days. The choice of such great evils exceedingly perplexed and confounded David, who, knowing he must accept of one of the three, argued with himself to this effect: "If, says he, I chuse the famine, it will appear as if I had more care for myself than my people, as it is very unlikely I should be distressed for the want of bread. If I chuse a course of unsuccessful battles with the enemy, it will appear the same, having strong holds or castles, to which I can fly for safety. But for the last, it is a calamity common as well to kings as subjects, and which strikes terror into all without distinction. I had rather fall into the hands of God than those of my enemies." *Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great, and let me not fall into the hand of man* ||.

David having made choice of the pestilence, God was pleased to send it immediately among the people, and it raged with such irresistible violence, that within the three days it took off no less than 70,000 men. It began in the extreme part of the kingdom, and made hasty advances towards Jerusalem, which when the king and inhabitants heard, they cloathed themselves in sackcloth and, with all humility, cried unto God for mercy. A little before the evening sacrifice (or before the time of evening prayer) there appeared an angel over Jerusalem, brandishing a flaming sword, as if going to destroy it. As soon as David saw this Divine messenger he broke out into an exclamation to this effect: "Lord, punish the shepherd, but preserve the sheep; pour down thy wrath on me and my family, but let me beseech thee to spare the

"innocent people; for 'tis I alone who have offended thee." *I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and my father's house* *.

It may not be improper to make a short digression, in order to put to rights such (and many no doubt, there are) as may think it strange that the people should be involved in the same punishment with David, who, at first view, appears to have been the only person that had committed the offence. It is to be observed, that kings in general are no otherwise to be punished in their regal capacities, nor, oftentimes, to be brought to account for the errors of their administration, but by public calamities; by famine, pestilence, foreign wars, domestic convulsions, or some other like distresses, that affect their people. If, therefore, it pleases God to shew his displeasure against princes for the public errors of their administration, it must be right and fit for him to afflict their people; and, indeed, this is nothing more than what frequently happens in the common course of Providence. If this be a difficulty, it affects natural religion as well as revealed; and the same considerations that will obviate the difficulty in one case will solve it also in the other. Besides, in this case, the people even themselves were very culpable; for the command was absolute: *When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul.* And therefore, as they knew, or might have known, that, upon being numbered, they were to pay the prescribed ransom, which yet they neglected or refused to do; as partners in the offence, they justly shared in the penalty inflicted. It is allowed, that the tax was not at this time demanded by David; and this was his sin, in setting aside a positive command of God. The demanding this tax by his own authority might have created a national disturbance, and therefore should have prevented him from numbering his people. But they submitted to be numbered, and were therefore bound to pay the tax, whether David demanded it of them or not, for the law did not exempt them from the payment, if he who numbered them did not demand it. They were to pay it as a ransom for their lives, and to exempt themselves from the plague; and were therefore punished with a plague for their neglect and disobedience.

David, indeed, takes the guilt upon himself, and declares his people innocent of it: *These sheep, what have they done?* And it is true that the

|| This was as much as if he had said, "I am now fully convinced of the great provocation I have given to the Lord my God, by breaking his law in numbering the people from motives of ostentation, and not with a view of supporting the temple service, for which numbering was originally intended. I am likewise, in the most humble manner, forced to acknowledge that I have put my trust in the arm of flesh, and not in the Lord Jehovah, who was at all times ready to help me. But still let me fall into the hands of that Divine Being, for I know that his tender mercies are over all his works, while the mercies of my enemies are, at best, little more than cruelty.

"Let God chastise me, for surely he is my friend, and will be so both in time and in eternity."

* The judgment against David for his transgression was sufficiently visible, otherwise he could not have seen the form that the destroying angel assumed; but here we find, that as a most pious man and a good sovereign, he repents of those sins he had committed in the most voluntary manner, and while he looks upon himself as the procuring cause of all the evils that had happened, he begs that God would wreak his vengeance upon him, and not upon his people, who were innocent.

the order to number the people was David's, of which his people were wholly innocent: but they should have remonstrated against it to the king, or voluntarily to have paid the capitation tax required of them; and as they did neither, they could not plead innocence as a reason for their exemption from punishment. And even supposing they were free from all blame in this affair, can we suppose they were so intirely free from all other transgressions, as that it was injustice in God to visit them with a pestilence? Were not many of them concerned in the rebellion of Absalom? Is it not expressly said that the *anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel*? And can we suppose that the righteous Lord, whose mercy is over all his works, could be angry with the people if innocent?—If not, God did them no injustice by sending the pestilence; and therefore none by sending it at that time, and as an immediate punishment of David's sin. God, by virtue of his supreme authority over mankind, may resume life whenever he pleases. If there be no sin, the immediate resumption of life will be no punishment; if there be, a resumption of life will not be unjust, though the immediate reason of that resumption may be, for the punishment of another; especially as all such instances have a real tendency to promote the public good, and to preserve alive in the minds both of princes and people, that reverence for the Deity, without which neither public or private virtue can subsist, nor the prosperity of kingdoms ever be secured and established upon solid and lasting foundations.

We shall only just add, to what we have already observed, that it is very plain the Israelites were punished, not altogether because David numbered the people, but because they had offended the Lord, and, by their vices, called down their punishment upon them: nor can we, upon a review of what has been related, want proofs of their criminality. Can any thing be more shameful and sinful than the rebellion we have mentioned in this and the preceding chapter? rebellions against a good and pious king, established over them by the immediate choice of God himself? Doubtless such conduct justly merited chastisement from the hand of God: and it may, perhaps, be thought not unworthy of observation, that other nations, after rebellions against their lawful monarchs, have suffered the like

punishment with the Israelites in the present case. The latter part of David's exclamation to Gad, *let thine hand be against me, &c.* is a noble instance of his generous concern for the welfare of his people. The language is tender and pathetic: it is the real language and spirit of a genuine, a true father of the people, devoting himself and family as sacrifices to God for the preservation of his subjects.—But to return.

In consequence of David's solemn humiliation and intercession with God for his people, the prophet Gad was sent to him the same day, with an order that he should erect an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite†. David immediately set about obeying the Divine commands, and when he came to the place, Araunah, seeing him at a distance, ran to meet him, and, after paying reverence, asked him, Why he came there, and what commands he had for his servant? David told him he came to purchase his threshing-floor, in order to raise an altar on it, and to offer sacrifices to God. Araunah replied in words to this effect: “Not only my threshing-floor, but all that I have is at my lord's service; and I humbly beseech God that he will be pleased to accept your sacrifice.” David thanked him for his generous offers, but told him, he could not accept of them, for that it must be a purchase, and not a gift, as it would not be right to offer a sacrifice at another's expence. He therefore gave him fifty shekels of silver for the threshing-floor and some oxen, and immediately offered up sacrifices to God, who, in consequence thereof, was pleased to reinstate him in his favour. *The Lord was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel*, the city of Jerusalem being mercifully spared, and exempted from this dreadful calamity.

After this David, encouraged by the Divine protection in having removed the pestilence from his people, continued to offer up sacrifices on the altar he had erected in this place; and publicly declared, *This is the house of the Lord God, this is the altar of the burnt-offering, for Israel*‡; hereby consecrating the spot for the erection of the intended temple, and to be the seat and center of public worship for all the tribes of Israel§.

CHAP.

† This threshing-floor was on Mount Moriah, where Cain and Abel are said to have offered up their sacrifices; where Abraham intended offering up his son Isaac, and where the temple of Solomon was afterwards erected.

‡ See 1 Chron. xxii. 1.

§ It is not improbable, that God, at this time, revealed

to David the exact frame and fashion of the temple; that from the acceptableness of his sacrifices he perceived that this threshing-floor was the place which God had designed for the situation of his temple, and that he not only purchased that, but the whole top of Mount Moriah likewise, for the ground-plot of the intended building.



C H A P. XIII.

David, being grown old and diseased, is cherished by Abishag, a young woman, a Shunammite. Adonijah, David's eldest son living, makes an attempt to obtain the throne in consequence of his father's infirmities. He is assisted in the conspiracy by Joab and Abiathar; but all their endeavours prove fruitless. Solomon, by David's appointment, is anointed king by Zadok and Nathan. Adonijah, being terrified, flies to the altar, and is spared by Solomon. David makes a speech to the princes of the respective tribes concerning the building of the temple. His last charge to his son Solomon. His death and character.

DAVID, being now grown into years (in his seventieth year, or ready to enter on it) experienced a great decay in his natural vigour and warmth, insomuch that though he was well covered with clothes, he could not get any heat. In consequence of this a consultation was held among his physicians, who advised that, to supply him with natural heat, a virgin should lie in the same bed with him. Accordingly, one Abishag, a young and beautiful woman of Shunam, belonging to the tribe of Issachar, was brought to him, and made his concubinary wife; but David had never any carnal knowledge of her, being, from his infirmities, incapable of possessing connubial enjoyments.

As David was become almost inactive from his natural infirmities, Adonijah (who, next after Absalom, was his eldest son) taking advantage of his imperfections, entertained thoughts of assuming the sovereignty, on a presumption that his father either could not, or would not, obstruct him. He was, indeed, a prince of exquisite beauty, greatly admired by the people, and particularly indulged* by his father. He was in disposition much the same as his brother Absalom, and pursued the like measures, having set up a pompous equipage, retained a prodigious number of attendants, and living in the most sumptuous manner.

Adonijah had gained over to his party Joab, the general of the forces, and Abiathar the priest, by whose advice he invited all his brothers (except Solomon) and all the great men of Judah (except Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, captain of the guards, and the officers of the army, who, with Zadok the priest, were not for him) to a sumptuous entertainment at Enrogel, near Jerusalem, the design of which was, as soon as the company began to be merry, to proclaim him king.

|| If it be asked, how the beauty of the person to be employed for this purpose was concerned in David's health, we answer, that the beauty he required is evidently beauty of complexion, which, as it indicates the health and temperament of the body, might, in the present case, be of singular importance.

* It is remarked of David, that one of his great faults, and what led him into many premunires, was, his extraordinary indulgence to his children, of whom he was so fond, that he seems to have overlooked their errors, and not reprov'd them, though he was bound to do it by a plain law (Levit. xix. 17.) and could not but know that the high-priest Eli was severely punished for such neglect.

† God had promised David by Nathan, (2 Sam. vii. 12.) that he would set upon his throne a son that should proceed from him, which plainly signified, that none of his sons al-

Nathan the prophet, who knew God's designation†, David's choice, and the people's interest, having received intelligence of the meeting appointed by Adonijah, gave information of it to Bathsheba, strongly advising her to go to the king, and press him, in the most urgent manner, immediately to declare Solomon his successor, things being come to such an extremity as to threaten the most imminent danger.

Bathsheba, taking Nathan's advice, immediately repaired to the king, and having acquainted him with Adonijah's conspiracy, begged him to name her son Solomon his successor, agreeable to the promise he had formerly made, and ratified with an oath. While she was with the king Nathan entered the apartment, and confirmed all she had said relative to the conspiracy; upon which David, turning to Bathsheba, said, *As the Lord liveth, that bath redeemed my soul out of all distress, even as I swear unto thee by the Lord God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day.*

David strictly performed his promise to Bathsheba. He immediately commanded Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, the captain of his guards, with the officers and ministers of state, to mount Solomon on the mule he was accustomed to ride himself‡; and having, in this manner, conducted him to Gihon§, Zadok and Nathan should there anoint him with holy oil, after which they should proclaim him king by sound of trumpet, saying, *God save king Solomon.* All this was strictly executed agreeable to the orders of David, after which Solomon was conducted back to Jerusalem amidst the shouts and acclamations of the people.

But how thunderstruck was Adonijah and his company, when, being just upon the point of proclaiming him king, they heard the sound of the trumpet,

ready born were to be the person; and in 1 Chron. xxii. 8, &c. he declared by the same prophet, that, after his father, Solomon should reign, and build him an house. This Adonijah could not but know; and therefore his setting himself against the decree of heaven made his sin the greater in attempting to possess himself of the throne.

‡ In these days it was a capital offence to ride upon the king's ass, or mule, to sit upon his throne, or to handle his sceptre, without his order: whereas, on the contrary, to have the honour to ride on the king's beast, by his appointment, was the highest dignity that could be bestowed on a subject. It was always considered in this light by the Persians, as appears from the story of Mordecai, in the sixth chapter of the Book of Esther.

§ Gihon was a little river or brook near Jerusalem, which discharged itself into the brook Kidron; and was afterwards rendered

trumpet, and the shouts of the people attending Solomon! As soon as they were informed of the occasion, fearful of the consequences of their conspiracy, each man thought proper to shift for himself. Adonijah, their leader, (conscious he had committed a crime worthy of death, by usurping the kingdom without his father's consent, and against the known design of God) fled to the altar for safety and protection. Here he continued some time, till, having obtained of Solomon a promise of life, on condition he would never make any future attempt against his government, he was admitted into the king's presence, where he made his obeisance to Solomon, in token of thankfulness for his preservation, and in acknowledgment of his brother's superiority and right to the throne of Israel.

David, having exalted his son Solomon to the throne, considering within himself that he was very young and tender, sent for him, and gave him a strict charge that, after his death, he should build an house for the Lord God. He told him that he had intended doing it himself, but that as he had made great wars, and shed much blood in them, God would not permit him to carry his design into execution: but that he had promised a son should be born to him, under whose reign he would give peace and quietness to Israel, and that he should build an house to his name. He then strongly exhorted him to undertake the work, prayed God that he would give him wisdom and understanding, and assured him he would prosper if he kept the statutes of the Lord as directed by Moses. After this he acquainted him with the preparations of gold, silver, materials, and workmen of all sorts, that he had already made towards the edifice, and that he had commanded all the princes of the people to assist him in erecting it, as they were now in a state of great prosperity, and profound peace. That he had divided the Levites, and the descendants of Aaron into their several orders and stations, and appointed to each of them their distinct offices and services, in every thing relating to the temple, and the solemn worship to be performed in it.

A short time after this David convened an as-

sembly of all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of all the companies that ministered to him by course, with all the officers and mighty men; the whole of whom being assembled at Jerusalem, he addressed them in words to this effect*: "Hear ye, my brethren and my people: I had determined in my own mind to have built an house, where the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord might perpetually abide, and for the footstool of the throne of our God, and have made great preparations for erecting this building. But from this I was prevented by the order of God, who, by his prophet, said to me, thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been engaged in many wars, and thereby hast shed much blood. However the Lord God of Israel chose me, before all the house of my father, to be king over Israel for ever; for he hath chosen in Judah the ruler, and in the house of Judah, the house of my father, and among the sons of my father, he took pleasure in me to make me reign over all Israel; and from all my sons, for the Lord hath given me many sons, he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the Lord over all Israel. And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house, and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be to him a father. And I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he firmly bind himself to do my commandments and judgments, as they are observed at this day. Now therefore, in the presence of all Israel, the congregation of the Lord, and in the hearing of our God, I beseech you, observe and diligently follow all the commands of the Lord your God, that you may inherit this good land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children after you for ever. And thou, Solomon my son, acknowledge thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth every imagination of the thoughts. If thou diligently seek him, he will be found of thee, and if thou forsake him, he will reject thee for ever. Observe now, that

rendered famous by the noble work of Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxxii. 30. Maimonides, and other Rabbies, assert, that the kings of the house of David were all obliged to be anointed by the side of a fountain or river; which they say was the reason why David commanded his servants to bring his son down to Gihon, and anoint him there. At this place, without the walls of Jerusalem, Zadok and Nathan anointed Solomon; that is, one of them poured out the oil, and the other anointed his head, drawing a circle round it in the form of a crown, to denote his delegation to the royal dignity. Another reason the Jews assign for chusing a situation for anointing their kings near a river is, to shew the perpetuity of their kingdom, because rivers run always, though the cities which they wash are continually decaying, and liable to destruction. Probably Gihon was more particularly chosen on this occasion, as being near Jerusalem, the most public place of resort, at that time, in the whole kingdom.

* The latter part of the speech which Josephus puts into David's mouth on this occasion, runs thus: "Our Father Jacob (as you all very well know) had twelve sons, and yet Judah was chosen by common consent to be ruler of all the rest. You know likewise, that I myself (though there were then six brothers of us) was advanced by God to the go-

vernment, and that none of the rest thought themselves injured: Wherefore I must now, in like manner, require it of you, and of all your sons, that you submit cheerfully and dutifully to my son Solomon, and that ye do it without any grumbling, or civil dissension, because it is from God's immediate command and commission, that he derives his authority. Put the case now, that God should have set a stranger over you, how great a folly and madness would it have been for you to murmur at it? But how thankful ought you to be, for the choice of so near a relation, when you yourselves are partakers of the honour that is done to your brother? There is nothing I so much long for, as to see God's gracious promises take a speedy effect, and the whole people put into a lasting possession of the blessings they are to enjoy under the reign of Solomon. And all this, my dear son, (says he, turning to Solomon) will be made good, and every thing succeed to your wish, so long as you govern according to piety and justice, with respect to your duty both towards God and man, upholding a reverence to the laws, and treading in the steps of your forefathers: but, whenever you pass these bounds, there is nothing but ruin and misery to be expected."

“ that the Lord hath chosen thee to build an
“ house for a sanctuary. Be resolute and per-
“ form it †.

Having said this, David, in the presence of the whole assembly, gave his son Solomon patterns, draughts or models, of all the porches and buildings that were to belong to the temple; the order of the courses he had fixed for the priests and Levites; on account of the gold and silver he had provided for all the instruments and vessels that were to be made use of in the solemnities of the temple service; the candlesticks and lamps; the table of shew bread; the altar of incense; and the cherubims that were to cover with their wings the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord. Having done this, he addressed himself in words to this effect: “ All these things
“ the Lord made me to understand by inspira-
“ tion, even all the works of his pattern;” or, as we would rather render the words, the pattern of all these works. “ Be strong, and of good
“ courage, and do it. Be not afraid or dismayed,
“ for the Lord my God is with thee. He will
“ not fail thee nor forsake thee, until thou hast
“ finished all the work for the service of the
“ House of the Lord. And behold the course
“ of the priests and Levites shall be with thee,
“ for all the service of the house of God, and
“ there shall be with thee, for all manner of
“ workmanship, every willing skilful man for
“ any manner of service. All the princes also,
“ and all the people, will be wholly at thy com-
“ mand.”

But David had yet a farther view in convening this assembly of the tribes of his kingdom, and that was, still more effectually to secure their assistance to his son and successor, in carrying on, and completing, the building of the temple, by persuading them to a liberal contribution towards this important service. To effect this, he farther addressed them nearly as follows ‡: “ Solomon,
“ my son, says he, whom alone God hath chosen,
“ is young and tender, and the work is great,
“ for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord
“ God. I have, therefore, with the utmost zeal
“ and power, prepared gold and silver, and brass,
“ and wood, for all things that are to be made
“ out of these several materials, and all manner
“ of precious stones, and marble stones in abun-
“ dance. Besides, as I have set my affection
“ towards the house of my God, I have gold
“ and silver that is my peculiar property, which
“ I will give for the house of my God, above
“ all that I have otherwise prepared for the house
“ of the sanctuary; the gold for things of gold,

“ and the silver for things of silver, and for all
“ manner of work to be made by the hands of
“ the artificers. And who now will willingly
“ offer with a full hand this day unto the Lord?”

This truly royal munificence of David inspired a noble generosity in the whole assembly, and each, ambitious to imitate the glorious liberality of their prince, willingly made their offerings to the same sacred service, rejoicing to contribute their share, and doing it with a perfect heart, out of an unfeigned affection to the God of Israel, and a fervent desire of having a temple erected to his name and honour. Their contributions amounted to five thousand talents and ten thousand drams of gold, eighteen thousand of brass, and an hundred thousand of iron, besides precious stones that were paid into the treasury of the house of the Lord.

David's heart was filled with pleasure when he saw how willingly and bountifully the assembly contributed towards carrying on the service he had recommended to them; and, in the fullness of his joy, addressed himself in thanksgivings to God to this effect:

“ Blessed be thou, O Jehovah, God of Israel,
“ our Father, for ever and for ever. To thee
“ belong greatness, power, glory, victory, and
“ majesty. For all that is in the heaven and in
“ the earth is thine. Thine is the kingdom, O
“ Jehovah, and thou art exalted as head over
“ all. Riches and honour are from thy presence,
“ for thou rulest over all, and in thy hand and
“ disposal is power and might; in thy hand to
“ make great, and strengthen every one thou
“ plearest. And now, O our God, we make
“ our acknowledgments to thee, and praise thy
“ glorious name. But who am I, and what is
“ my people, that we should be able willingly
“ to offer, as we have now done? But all things
“ are from thee, and of what we have received
“ from thy hand, we have given unto thee. For
“ we are strangers before thee and sojourners, as
“ all our fathers were. As a shadow are our
“ days on earth, and there is no hope of long
“ continuance here. All this store therefore, O
“ Jehovah our God, which we have provided to
“ build an house to the name of thy holiness, is
“ from thy hand; for thine are all things. But
“ I know, O my God, that thou searchest the
“ heart, and that thou approvest every instance
“ of integrity. As for me, in the uprightness
“ of my heart, I have freely offered up all these
“ things; and I have also seen with joy, that thy
“ people who are present here, have offered freely
“ and liberally to thee. O Jehovah, thou God
“ of

† There is certainly no person, who reads over this speech of David's with attention, but what must admire the great prudence and piety that appears in it. He was now grown old; he had advanced Solomon to the throne, who had elder brethren that might envy his advancement, and endeavour to disturb the settlement that had been made in his favour. To secure the affection and fidelity of all the principal persons then assembled, he puts them in mind that he chose the tribe of Judah before all the others, as the tribe in which the regal power should be established, his father's house before all the other families of that tribe, himself before all his brethren to be king of Israel, and Solomon, in preference to all his other sons, to succeed him in the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel, and that he had commanded him to build his house, and the courts belong-

ing to it, promising to establish his kingdom, if he continued faithful and diligent in keeping his commandments. This would have argued the greatest imprudence and folly, had not the assembly well known that the Divine appointment David appealed to was real; but as he was sensible they knew this, a more prudent step could not have been taken to reconcile the affections of the people to Solomon's interest, and secure him in the peaceable possession of the throne. His solemn exhortation to the states of his kingdom, and his son, to keep all the commandments of God was a noble proof of his real piety, and his concern for the public welfare; as he knew this was the only method by which the national prosperity could be properly secured.

‡ See 1 Chron. xxix. 1, &c.

“ of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, let
 “ this be thy care, perpetually to form the
 “ thoughts of the hearts of thy people, so as to
 “ prepare their hearts towards thyself. And to
 “ Solomon, my son, give thou a perfect heart,
 “ that he may observe thy precepts, thy testimo-
 “ nies, and thy statutes; and that he may do
 “ every thing and build the temple, towards
 “ which I have made the necessary prepara-
 “ tions §.”

After David had finished his address to Jeho-
 vah, the God of Israel, he ordered the whole as-
 sembly publickly to bless the God of their fa-
 thers. They immediately offered him their so-
 lemn praises, and, in token of their acknow-
 ledging him as their God, bowed themselves
 down before him; after which they made their
 obedience, and did homage to the king. This
 being done, David dismissed the assembly, who,
 the next day, offered up sacrifices, feasted on
 them with great joy before the Lord, confirmed
 David's choice of Solomon to succeed him, and
 anointed him a second time king over Israel.

A short time after this, David, finding, from
 his natural infirmities, that his dissolution was
 near at hand, called for his son Solomon, and
 gave him his last exhortation; the substance of
 which was nearly the same as he had before de-
 livered to him; namely, to walk in his ways,
 and keep his statutes and his commandments,
 his judgments and his testimonies, that he might
 prosper in all he did ||. Having said this, he
 gave Solomon a particular charge with respect to
 two persons who had highly offended and in-
 jured him, namely, Joab and Shimei. The
 charge to Joab was conceived in these words:
Thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiab
did to me, and, what he did to the two captains of the
host of Israel, unto Abner, the son of Ner, and unto
Amasa, the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed
the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war

upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his
shoes that were on his feet; that is, treacherously,
and under pretence of peace and friendship, be-
sprinkled his girdle, and wet his shoes with the
the blood of these two generals, as though he
had slain them in battle. Do, therefore, accord-
ing to thy wisdom, and let not his hoary head go
down to the grave in peace.

Here are three murders David mentions to
 Solomon as the grounds of his charge not to let
 Joab die a natural death. The one is intimated:
Thou knowest what he did to me, viz. when he
 cruelly stabbed Absalom, contrary to my imme-
 diate orders: the two others are expressly men-
 tioned, namely, those of Abner and Amasa; and
 and on these accounts he advises Solomon to put
 him to death. This advice may appear strange
 to some, but we cannot help thinking, upon ma-
 ture consideration, that it was worthy of a good
 king, and fit to be given at a time when he
 thought himself not long for this world. The
 crimes which drew down this punishment up-
 on Joab have been already sufficiently displayed
 not to be forgot by the reader. Many reasons
 concurred to prevent David's calling him to an
 account; but it is plain that he never forgot nor
 forgave his crime: nay, he could not, consistent-
 ly with the law, have forgiven him, if he had
 been inclined to it. His deferring his punish-
 ment so long was no reason why he should always
 do it. Reasons of state prevented its being in-
 flicted before, and reasons of state required its
 being put into execution at this juncture. In
 time of war it was dangerous to attempt it on
 account of the power, influence, and military
 skill of Joab; in a time of peace it was safe, be-
 cause Joab's power was then upon the decline,
 and his services were unnecessary. Joab was
 ambitious, enterprizing and restless, and having
 not proved very loyal to the father, might have
 practised the same perfidy against the son; who,
 being

§ This prayer of thanksgiving made by David cannot be
 read without the greatest surprize and pleasure. The ad-
 dress to the Almighty is expressed with great dignity and
 propriety; and the sentiments of the Deity are rational and
 sublime. He acknowledges God as infinitely great and pow-
 erful, as encompassed with glory, as the author of victory,
 as clothed with majesty, as the great proprietor of heaven
 and earth, as universal sovereign, supreme in dominion, the
 great source of riches and honour, having the kingdoms of
 the earth in his disposal, and as distributing greatness, pow-
 er, and prosperity to whomsoever he pleases; as the searcher
 of the heart, as approving integrity, and more pleased with
 the right disposition of the giver, than the offering he pre-
 sents. And having acknowledged that his own, and his
 people's prosperity, were owing to the Divine goodness, and
 solemnly prayed that they might constantly adhere to their
 God, and his son be a pattern to them of religious subjection
 and obedience, he excites them to a public and general ado-
 ration of God, and thus accomplished the great scheme he
 had at heart, namely, the peaceable succession of Solomon
 his son to his throne and kingdom. It is scarce possible to
 conceive any solemnity more truly grand and royal than
 this: a solemnity heightened by religion, honoured by the
 presence of a powerful prince and the states of his kingdom,
 increased by the magnificence and plenty of the entertain-
 ment, brightened by the joy and gladness of the whole as-
 sembly, and that concluded by such a settlement of the go-
 vernment, as produced an almost forty years of uninterrupted
 prosperity and peace.—On this occasion David composed the
 72d Psalm, which the reader will find corresponds with the
 prayer of thanksgiving above mentioned.

|| The words Josephus puts into David's mouth, on this

occasion, are to the following effect: “ I am now (says he)
 “ going a journey common to all, but to a place from whence
 “ no traveller returns. Wherefore, while I am yet living,
 “ let me remind you of those things I have before said to
 “ you; namely, that you exercise your authority with jus-
 “ tice over your subjects, humbly obey God who has been
 “ pleased to bestow the government on you, and carefully
 “ observe those laws and commandments which he has trans-
 “ mitted to you from the great legislator Moses. Be careful
 “ that you are not induced to violate these injunctions, either
 “ from the flatteries of your courtiers, your own corrupt de-
 “ sires, or any other cause whatever. If you do, be assured
 “ your great and Divine Protector will immediately forsake
 “ you; whereas, on the contrary, if you behave yourself
 “ towards him as you ought, and as I most sincerely wish,
 “ you will confirm the kingdom to your posterity; no other
 “ house but our's will sway the sceptre of the Israelites, but it
 “ will be continued to you, and yours for ever. Forget not
 “ the crimes of Joab, who, through jealousy, put to death two
 “ just and faithful generals, namely, Abner, the son of Ner,
 “ and Amasa, the son of Ithra: punish him for their deaths
 “ as you shall think fit; for, being more powerful than
 “ myself, he has hitherto escaped the threats of justice. I
 “ beseech you to do all the good offices you can for the sons
 “ of Barzillai, the Gileadite, not under the light of an ob-
 “ ligation, but as an acknowledgment for the great benefits
 “ I received from their father during my banishment, which
 “ I reckon as a debt incumbent on our whole family to
 “ discharge. As for Shimei, the Benjamite, who reviled me
 “ in the days of my persecution, and whom I afterwards
 “ pardoned, you may act with him as you think proper, but
 “ I would not have him escape unpunished.”

being young, and scarcely settled on his throne, might have suffered from his treachery, his want of fidelity, and his ambitious views, which were insatiable.

“We may consider this transaction in another light: we may consider Joab as relative to David in his public capacity. Now David, in his public capacity, was king of Israel: Joab, in his public capacity, stood related to him as his general, and assisted him, and adhered to him in his extremities. David therefore, in his public capacity, as king, was obliged to punish Joab with death in his public capacity as general, assassin, and murderer. If Joab had been his faithful general, and frequently assisted David in his extremities; private obligations are in their nature inferior, and ought to give way to public ones; and the yielding up such an offender to public justice, when personal obligations might have been pleaded in his favour, was a nobler sacrifice in its nature, and renders David's merits, as a prince, the more illustrious. In this light we must commend the master, who died meditating and ordering the punishment of a servant, who, by basely stabbing two worthier men than himself, forfeited the protection of his king and country, and cancelled all the obligations that could arise from his former services. It should be added, that whatever Joab's past services were to David, and however faithfully he had formerly been attached to him, yet he had now been engaged in a conspiracy to depose him, and to set aside the intended succession to the crown, and had actually proclaimed Adonijah king, during his father's life. This was adding rebellion to murder. What was David to do? Was he to have forgiven him at his last hours, in order to manifest his own charity? No! For if a prince's charity influences him, living or dying, to pardon repeated offences, inconsistent with the public safety, it is folly and weakness, and not virtuous charity; it is cruelty to his people, instead of real generosity and goodness. David had not this charity, and it heightens his character that he had not. His last charge to Solomon shews his inviolable re-

gard to justice, by positively ordering the execution of a murderer too powerful for himself to punish; and he would neither have been a wife nor a righteous prince had he forgotten to do it.

After David had given this charge to his son Solomon, to execute the due punishment on Joab for his numerous and aggravated crimes, he gave him another relative to Shimei * the Benjamite, who, as hath been already observed, when the king was in his flight from Jerusalem, to prevent his falling into Absalom's hands, met him, railed at, and cursed him in his journey; and, as he went on, had the farther insolence to pelt him with stones. *Behold*, said he to Solomon, *thou hast with thee Shimei, the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Baburim, which cursed me with a grievous curse, in the day that I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I swore to him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoary head bring thou down to the grave with blood †.*

It appears, from the expression, *Behold thou hast with thee*, that Shimei was at this time in Jerusalem; and therefore David thought it a proper opportunity for confining him, that he might not spread disaffection to Solomon's government among those of his own tribe, or of any of the other tribes of Israel: a precaution the more necessary in the infancy of Solomon's reign, and as some of his brethren were inclined to dispute with him the succession to the crown. It is far from being improbable, that Shimei was in the party with Adonijah against Solomon, as he was in that of Absalom against David: and this is the true reason of those words, *Now therefore hold him not guiltless*, that is, “Though I forgave him, and swore to him that he should not die, do not thou look on him as an innocent man that is reconciled to my family, and thy succession to the throne of Israel: he is Shimei still, and wants nothing but a fair opportunity to declare it. Clear him not, therefore, as I did, if thou

* The sense of the two charges given by David to his son Solomon relative to Joab and Shimei, are thus expressed by the learned Bishop Patrick: Speaking of the first he says, “Thou rememberest what Joab did unto me; with what insolence he treated me in the time of the war against Absalom; how, contrary to my orders, he slew him, and afterwards talked to me in a menacing and impious manner. Thou rememberest what he did to Amasa, whom I intended to have put in his place, and made the general of all my forces; and what to Abner, who was then endeavouring to gain over to my party all that adhered to the house of Saul. The injury done to these two brave men redounds upon me, since they were both under my protection, and both murdered, basely murdered, because I had an esteem for them; and till justice be done to their murderer, (which I in my life-time had not power to do) *their innocent blood will not depart from my house*. Do thou therefore take care to atton for it, and whenever he commits any transgression against thee, let the blood of these two valuable men be charged to his account, and let him, as he has long deserved, be put to death.” Speaking of Shimei, he says, “Thou hast Shimei with thee, and some share perhaps he may have in thy favour; but trust him not, he is no friend to kings or kingly power. Remember what he did to me in my distress; how bitterly, how virulently he cursed me to my face; and I make no doubt, but that he would be the same to thee in the

like circumstances. I forgave him in my exile, because I looked upon him, as an instrument in God's hands to humble me for my great offence. I forgave him in my return home, because he came to me when my heart was open, and unwilling to damp the joy of my restoration with the effusion of any blood. I promised him his life; and let not that promise be violated in my days: but what I did is no rule or obligation to thee. Let him not die, however, for his offence against me, but rather watch his conduct, and, if he should chance to give thee a fresh occasion, be sure to lay hold of it, because it is not in his nature to be a good subject.”

† The ingenious Dr. Delaney observes, that the words *but his hoary head bring thou down to the grave with blood* is not rightly translated; for that the particle *van* should be rendered, as in similar cases, not connectively, but disjunctively: for instance, Agur, (Prov. xxx.) beseeches God to keep him from the extremes, both of poverty and wealth: if the *van* were to be rendered connectively, the petition would run thus: *Give me not poverty and riches*—which is absurd: in the same analogy this verse, rightly translated, will stand thus: *Now therefore neither hold him not guiltless, (for thou art a wise man, &c.) nor his hoary head bring thou down to the grave with blood*. In this sense, the advice is full of humanity, as well as wisdom; and Solomon understood and observed it in this sense, and no other.

thou findest him guilty of any mal-practices ; *but his hoary head bring down, &c.* Cut him off as an old offender, and dangerous enemy, to secure thy own peace, and the safety of thy government." Farther, David's telling Solomon that he *swore to Shimei, that he would not put him to death for his outrage and treason* is a demonstrative proof that he did not advise Solomon to put him to death for the crime which he himself had solemnly forgiven ; for, can it be imagined that David would tell Solomon he had sworn not to put Shimei to death, and in the same breath order him, in violation of his oath, to be put to death ? If he intended that Solomon should have immediately put him to death, there would be neither reason nor sense in the words, *thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him.* Now to what purpose was it to tell Solomon that he knew how to behave to Shimei, if David's command was immediately to cut him off, and Solomon understood him in that sense ? But that Solomon did not understand his father in this sense is evident, by his ordering him to build an house for himself in Jerusalem †, as well as from the different manner in which he afterwards treated Shimei and Joab. By the way, let it be observed, that after Shimei's confession of his fault, Abishai asked, *shall not Shimei be put to death, because he cursed the Lord's anointed ?* By this question he meant, put to death instantly, as appears from David's answer, *Shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel ? Do not I know that I am this day king over Israel ? Therefore the king said to Shimei, Thou shalt not die ; and the king swore to him, viz. that he should not then, or on that day, or at that time, be put to the sword.* On the whole, nothing farther can certainly be collected from the words, as they stand connected, but that David reprieved Shimei from immediate execution, and left himself at liberty to call him to an account at any other time for the outrage and treason of which he had been guilty ; and therefore David violated no oath, if he actually ordered Solomon to put him to death as a dangerous enemy to his person and government ; and much less still if, for the same reason, he advised him to keep a strict watch over Shimei, and put him to death only in case he should commit any crime in future that merited the

forfeiture of his life. This is the true state of the case, and we would only ask those who are inclined to impeach David's character on account of his conduct in this particular, how they can think it either inconsistent with piety, or the advice of a prince on his death-bed ? It is true, forgiveness of enemies is a duty, provided they cease to become our enemies ; but no man is obliged by any law so to forgive an enemy, continuing such, as not to take the proper methods to guard against the effects of his enmity, and bring him to justice, if no other method will prove effectual. Much less is a prince obliged so to forgive an implacable enemy to his crown and government, and one who is likely to disturb the settlement of the crown in his successor, as not to order the successor to be upon his guard against him, and punish him, when guilty, according to his demerits. Such a caution and order is what he owes to his people ; and he may die, as a private person, in charity with all mankind, and forgive every private injury against himself ; and yet as a prince advise what is necessary to the public good after his decease, and even the execution of particular persons, if, by abusing the lenity and respite they once received, they should be guilty of new and capital offences.

At the same time that David gave these charges to his son Solomon relative to Shimei and Joab who had done him the most distinguished injuries, he did not forget one from whom he had received the greatest benefits, by having assisted him at a time when distresses stared him in the face abroad, and wretchedness and misery visited his family at home. *But shew kindness,* said he, *unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table : for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother.*

This was the last interview Solomon had with his father David, who, a very short time after, paid the debt of nature in the 71st year of his age, and 40th of his reign, seven of which he ruled over the tribe of Judah alone, and thirty-three years more over all Israel §. He was buried with great pomp in that part of the city of Jerusalem, which himself had taken from the Jebusites, and called, after his own name, the City of David ||.

With

† See 1 Kings ii. 36.

§ It is said (2 Sam. v. 5.) that David reigned seven years and six months in Hebron, and thirty-three in Jerusalem, which make his reign forty years and an half. But we must remember, that it is very common, in scripture computation, to omit smaller sums, and only reckon by a round number ; for which reason these six months are not taken notice of in this account of David's reign.

|| The sepulchre of David was always held in the greatest veneration by the Jews. It was in being in St. Peter's time, for so he tells the people, Acts ii. 29. Dio (in the life of Adrian) informs us that part of it was fallen down in the Emperor Adrian's reign. Modern travellers describe some magnificent monuments hewed in a rock not far from Jerusalem, which are, doubtless, very antient, but they do not agree that they were the sepulchres of the kings of Judah. It is, however, somewhat strange, that the place of David's sepulchre (which both the Chaldeans and Romans, when they took Jerusalem, thought proper to spare) should now be so entirely lost, that, for many years past, not the least traces of it have been to be found. But though Providence has so ordered it, that the place of David's sepulchre should not at present be known, yet there does not want an eternal

monument of his most excellent genius. The Book of Psalms, which, for the most part, was composed by him, doth publish the glory of its author more than the most pompous Eulogies ; and the Son of Sirach has consecrated an epitaph to his memory which will remain when brass and marble shall be no more. *As the fat (says he) is taken away from the peace-offering, so was David chosen out of the people of Israel. He played with Lions as with kids, and with bears as with lambs ; he slew a giant when he was young, and took away reproach from the people ; for he called upon the Most High Lord, and he gave strength to his right-hand to slay this mighty warrior, and to set up the horn of his people. So the people honoured him with ten thousands, and praised him in blessings of the Lord ; for he destroyed the enemies on every side, and brought to nought the Philistines, his adversaries :—In all his works he praised the Holy One most high, and blessed the Lord with words of glory :—He set singers also before the altar, that, by their voices, they might make sweet melody, and daily sing praises in their songs. He beautified their feasts, and set their solemn times in perfect order :—The Lord took away his sins, and exalted his horn for ever ; he gave him a covenant of kings, and a throne of glory in Israel.—See Ecclesiasticus, chap. xlvii. 2, &c.*

With respect to the character * of David, his life is loaded with such a multiplicity of the most singular transactions, that, to give it in a compass usual to other distinguished characters would not be to do him that justice his great merits deserve. We shall therefore, in as concise a manner as possible, recapitulate the principal incidents that occurred from his first becoming popular to the period that produced his dissolution, whereby the reader's mind will be properly refreshed, and the character due to David will not be curtailed of any particle that is necessary to immortalize the name of so excellent and illustrious a person.

David, the youngest son of Jesse, (a shepherd youth,) was chosen of God to be king of Israel, and at his command anointed to this dignity by the hands of Samuel, a venerable prophet, in the room of Saul, who had been rejected for his disobedience to the divine orders, in feloniously seizing to his own use, the prey of an enemy, which God, the supreme king of Israel, had devoted to destruction.—He is introduced to court as a man expert in musick, a mighty valiant man, a man of war, prudent in matters, a comely person, and one favoured of the Lord.—By his skill in musick he relieved Saul under a melancholy indisposition that had seized him, was highly beloved by his royal master, and made one of his guards.—In a war with the Philistines he accepted the challenge of a gigantic champion, who defied the armies of Israel, and being skilful at the sling, he slew him with a stone, returned safely with his head, and thus secured to his prince an easy victory over his country's enemies.—The reputation he gained, by this glorious action, raised an incurable jealousy and resentment against him, in the mind of the king his master; who, after two unsuccessful attempts to murder him, married him to his younger daughter, that she might be a snare to him, and that he might cause him to fall by the hands of the Philistines; sending him upon an expedition against them, to bring in an hundred of their foreskins, in which he hoped he would have met with his own destruction.—In this exalted station, and amidst the dangers that encompassed him, he behaved with singular prudence, so that he was in high esteem both in the court and camp.—The modesty and prudence of his behaviour, and his approved courage and resolution, gained him the confidence and friendship of Jonathan, the king's eldest son, who *loved him as his own soul*, became his advocate with his father, and obtained from him a promise, confirmed by an oath, that he would no more attempt to destroy him.—But his jealousy returned by a fresh victory David gained over the Philistines; who, finding the king was determined to have his life, retired from court, and was dismissed in peace by Jonathan, after a

solemn renewal of their friendship, to provide for his own safety.—In this state of banishment, there resorted to him companies of men, who were uneasy in their circumstances, oppressed by their creditors, or discontented with Saul's tyrannical government, to the number of six hundred men, to protect him from the violence of his unreasonable persecutor; whom he kept in the most excellent order, exercised in the most friendly services, and by whose valour he gained signal advantages for his country; but never employed them in opposition to, or rebellion against the king, or in a single instance to distress or subvert his government.—Such was the veneration he paid him, and so sacred the regard he had for his life, such the generosity of his temper, that though it was thrice in his power to have cut him off, he gloriously spared him, and was absolutely determined never to destroy him, whom God had constituted the king of Israel.—His friendship with Jonathan, the king's son, was a friendship of strict honour, whom he never seduced from his allegiance and filial duty; in him Jonathan had so firm a confidence, that as he knew he would be king, he promised himself he should be the next person in dignity and authority under him; and with his friend David covenanted by oath, that he *would not cut off his kindness from his house for ever*.—Being provoked by a churlish farmer, who evil treated and abused his messengers, he, in the warmth of his temper, swore he would destroy him and his family; but was immediately pacified by the address and prudence of a wife, of whom the wretch was unworthy; her he sent in peace and honour to her family, and blessed for her advice, and keeping him from avenging himself with his own hand.—Being forced to banish himself into an enemy's country, he was faithful to the prince who protected him; and, at the same time mindful of the interest of his nation, he cut off many of those, who had harrassed and plundered his fellow subjects.—When pressed by the king, into whose dominions he retired, to join in a war against his own country, and father-in-law, he prudently gave him such an answer as his situation required; neither promising the aid demanded of him, nor tying up his hands from serving his own prince, and the army that fought under him; only assuring him in general, that he had never done any thing that could give him just reason to think he would refuse to assist him against his enemies.

Upon the death of Saul, he cut off the Amalekite who came to make a merit of having slain him; and by the immediate direction of God, who had promised him the succession, went up to Hebron, where, on a free election, he was anointed king over the house of Judah; and after about a seven years contest, he was unanimously chosen king by all the tribes of Israel,

* The character Josephus gives of David is to this effect: "He was (says he) a most excellent person, and possessed every virtue that became a king, and one who had the welfare of so many nations committed to him. He was superior to all others in valour, and in all his wars on behalf of his subjects, he himself rushed into dangers, and by undergoing all the difficulties of warfare, encouraged his soldiers to noble actions, rather than commanded

them as a sovereign. He had an excellent faculty of considering and discerning how to provide for future events, and managing those that were actually present. He was sober, mild, kind to those in distress, just, and humane. As to those things, which kings may claim as their peculiar prerogatives, he offended in no one instance, by the abuse of the greatness of his power, but in the affair of the wife of Uriah."

rael, according to the word of the Lord by Samuel, upon the death of Ishbosheth, who was treacherously murdered by two of his own captains; whom David justly cut off for their perfidy, treason and parricide.

As king of Israel, he administered justice and judgment to all his people, was a prince of courage, and great military prudence and conduct, had frequent wars with the neighbouring nations, to which he was generally forced by their invading his dominions and plundering his subjects; against them he never lost a battle; he never besieged a city without taking it, nor, as for any thing that can be proved, used any severities against those he conquered, beyond what the law of arms allowed, his own safety required, or the cruelties of his enemies rendered just, by way of retaliation; enriching his people by the spoils he took, and providing large stores of every thing necessary for the magnificent temple he intended to erect, in honour of the God of Israel.—Having rescued Jerusalem out of the hands of the Jebusites, he made it the capital of his kingdom, and the place of his residence; and being willing to honour it with the presence of the Ark of God, he brought it to Jerusalem in triumph, and divested himself of his royal robes, out of reverence to God, he clothed himself in the habit of his ministers, and with them expressed his joy by dancing and music; condemned only by one haughty woman, whom, as a just punishment of her insolence, he seems ever to have separated from his bed.—Though his crimes were heinous, and highly aggravated, in the affair of Uriah and Bathsheba, he patiently endured reproof, humbly submitted to the punishment appointed him, atoned for his sins, as far as he could, by a sincere repentance, and obtained mercy and forgiveness from God, though not without some severe marks of his displeasure, for the grievous offences he had been guilty of.—A rebellion is raised against him by his son Absalom, whose life he commanded the general to spare.—When forced by it to depart from Jerusalem, he prevented the just punishment of a wretch who cursed and stoned him.—When restored to his throne, he spared him upon his submission, and would not permit a single man to be put to death in Israel, upon account of it.—He, with a noble confidence, made the commander of the rebel forces general of his own army, in the room of Joab, whom he intended to call to an account for murder and treason.—After this, when obliged by the command of God, to give up some of Saul's family to justice, for the murder of the Gibeonites, he spared Mephibosheth, Micah, and his family, the male descendants of Saul and Jonathan, who alone could

have any pretence to dispute the crown with him, and surrendered only Saul's bastard children, and those of his daughter by Adriel, who had no right or possible claim to the throne, and could never give him any uneasiness in the possession of it; and thus shewed his inviolable regard for his oaths, his tenderness to Saul, and the warmth of his gratitude and friendship to Jonathan.—In the close of his life, and in the near prospect of death, to demonstrate his love of justice, he charges Solomon to punish Joab, for the base murder of two great men, whom he assassinated under the pretence of peace and friendship; and to manifest his care of his successor's safety, and prevent any disturbances in the beginning of his government, he charges him to have an eye on the conduct of an old turbulent rebel, and, except cutting him off, to deal with him according to his prudence, and not to spare him if he found any thing in him worthy of death.—And as if one thing more was wanting to compleat the catalogue of his noble actions, he professed the greatest regard for every appearance of virtue and holiness, and gave the most shining and indisputable proofs of an undissembled reverence for, and sincere piety to God; ever obeying the direction of his prophets, worshipping him alone throughout the whole of his life, and making the wisest settlement to perpetuate the worship of the same God, throughout all succeeding generations.

With respect to his psalms, they breathe the genuine disposition of piety; they are written with a true spirit of poetry; the sentiments to be found in them are often the most grand and sublime, and which, had they been wrote on any other subjects but those of religion, would have been regarded as proofs of a most excellent genius; and his admirers would have wondered at the calmness and sedateness of a man, who, amidst the multiplicity of his affairs, the variety of the persecutions he suffered, the imminent dangers that surrounded him, and the numerous wars he was engaged in, could find any leisure hours, or tranquil dispositions, for the polite and delicate entertainments of poetry and music.

Such are the outlines of a Jewish prince, whom Christians justly extol as a man after God's own heart; whom God himself called to be king over Israel; who faithfully answered the purposes for which God raised him; in whose family he established the throne; with whom he made an everlasting covenant; and who was the great progenitor of the Messiah himself, who now reigns over all, and *shall reign, till all his enemies are put under his feet.*

C H A P. XIV.

Solomon succeeds his father David on the throne of Israel. Adonijah, his elder brother, concert's a scheme for possessing himself of the sovereignty, in which he is assisted by Joab, Shimei and Abiathar the priest. The scheme is detected by Solomon, who puts to death Joab and Shimei, and removes Abiathar from the priestly office. Solomon marries the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. He asks for wisdom of God, who not only grants his request, but moreover promises him riches and honour. Gives evident tokens of his superior knowledge and power in various instances. Receives a congratulatory address from Hiram king of Tyre, who furnishes him with timber for building the temple, in return for which he sends Hiram wheat and oil. Builds the temple. Account of the ancient state of Jerusalem, with a particular description of the temple built by Solomon.

ON the death of David, his son Solomon, who had been declared by him king of Israel, with the Divine approbation, acceded to the throne, to the universal satisfaction of the people. He was complimented on the occasion by the princes and great men of all the tribes, who, in congratulatory addresses, wished him success in all his undertakings, and that he might enjoy a long and happy reign.

Solomon was no sooner seated on the throne than a circumstance occurred that compelled him, for his own security, to put in execution the commands of his dying father. Adonijah, his elder brother, had, in his father's life-time, made bold pretensions to the throne, but his schemes were disconcerted, and he was pardoned by Solomon, on condition of his becoming a good subject, and that he would never more make any attempt to obtain the sovereignty. But, by the persuasion of Joab and Abiathar, he was now put upon another bold project, which was, to desire Abishag (the late king's concubine in his old age) in marriage, hoping thereby to strengthen his interest, and that he might be enabled, at some future opportunity, to disturb the peace of Solomon. To effect this, he went to Bathsheba, the queen-mother, whom he intreated to ask the king to permit him to marry Abishag. Bathsheba did as she was desired, but the king was so far from granting her request, that he was shocked at the boldness of it, and said, *Why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab, the son of Zeruiah**. Convinced, by this request, that Adonijah had some treasonable design at the bottom, Solomon determined to prevent the execution of it by immediately cutting him off. Now, therefore, said he, as the Lord liveth, which hath

established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and hath made me an house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day. In consequence of this resolution he dispatched Benaiah the captain of his guards, to Adonijah, with orders to put him instantly to death; which orders being strictly obeyed, Solomon thus got rid of one of his most implacable enemies.

Having thus removed Adonijah, the king called for Abiathar the priest, whom he rebuked, in very severe terms, for his disaffection. He told him, that though he deserved death for having been false to him in joining with Adonijah, yet, for the services he had done his father, and the assistance he gave in removing the Ark to Jerusalem, he would spare his life: "But, says he, as a punishment for your iniquities, you shall no longer enjoy the priestly office; neither shall you ever again come into my sight. Go, therefore, immediately, to Anathoth, and there, on pain of death, wear out the remainder of your days."

When Joab heard the fate of Adonijah and Abiathar, (being conscious of his guilt, and expecting no less punishment than death) he fled for protection to the tabernacle, not doubting but the veneration the king had for so sacred a place would secure his safety. But no sooner did Solomon understand where he had taken shelter, than he commanded Benaiah immediately to go to the place, and put him to death. Benaiah went agreeable to the king's command, and, finding Joab at the altar, bade him come forth; but Joab would not quit his situation, saying, if he must perish, he had rather die there than in any other place. In consequence of this, Benaiah returned to the king, and told him what Joab had said; upon which Solomon ordered him to go immediately back, and dispatch him†. "Do (said he) as he hath said, and fall upon

* Had Solomon complied with this request of his mother in favour of his elder brother, it must have been productive of the most fatal consequences. It is no wonder the king should be irritated at the demand, though he reproved Bathsheba in the gentlest terms his indignation would admit; for Adonijah, by asking Abishag, David's wife, did, in fact, ask the kingdom also, since the wives of the deceased

monarch could only belong to the person who succeeded to the throne.

† It was formerly very customary among princes, to employ their officers, or greatest confidants, in such like executions. Among the Romans, the soldiers were always the persons, who carried to prison, to torture, or to execution, such as were found guilty of any offence; and this Tertullian makes

" upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest
 " take away the innocent blood, which Joab
 " shed, from me, and from the house of my
 " father. And the Lord shall return his blood
 " upon his own head, who fell upon two men
 " more righteous and better than he, and slew
 " them with the sword, my father David not
 " knowing thereof; to wit, Abner, the son of
 " Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa,
 " the son of Jether, captain of the host of Ju-
 " dah. Their blood shall therefore return upon
 " the head of Joab, and upon the head of his
 " seed for ever: but upon David, and upon his
 " seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne
 " shall there be peace for ever from the Lord."

Benaiah, agreeable to the king's orders, went a second time to the tabernacle, where, finding Joab in the same situation he had left him, he immediately put him to death, after which Solomon made Benaiah general of his army instead of Joab, and appointed Zadok to the priesthood instead of Abiathar.

The next person that engaged the king's attention was Shimei, who had so grossly treated David in his flight from Jerusalem. Being brought before Solomon, he ordered him to be confined in the city, as a prisoner at large; but with a strict injunction not to move out of it on pain of death †. *Build thee, said he, an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither. For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head.* Shimei

makes an argument to dissuade Christians from engaging in the wars, lest thereby they should be obliged to imprison, punish, or execute malefactors. In Dan. ii. 24. we read, that *Nebuchadnezzar sent Arioch, who was chief commander of his troops, to destroy the wise-men of Babylon*, because they could not interpret his dream; and therefore we need less wonder, that we find Solomon employing Benaiah, the captain of his guard, on the like office: but whether he did not first drag Joab from the altar, before he slew him, for fear of polluting the holy place with blood, or whether Solomon did not rather think fit to have him killed even at the altar, and let all men see, that no place, though never so sacred, should secure any man from the hand of justice, commentators have not agreed.

† The reader is here desired to recur to the defence of David's charge relating to Joab and Shimei at the close of the preceding chapter. It is there asserted that the charge was different, as it respected each of them. This difference is farther evident from the different manner in which Solomon treated them. If the charge had been the same with respect to Shimei, as it was to Joab, what should have prevented Solomon from immediately executing Shimei, as well as Joab? But this Solomon, in his wisdom, knew he could not do; for David told him that he had pardoned Shimei to prevent his execution; because his offence was personal, and David had a right to forgive it. But he had never pardoned Joab, nor in justice could do it, because he was guilty of death for repeated murders, by the laws of God and man. Solomon therefore acted wisely and justly in reference to Shimei by sparing him, but honourably confining him, that he might have the proper security for his future good behaviour. Shimei, sensible of the king's kindness, tells him, (1 Kings ii. 38.) *The saying is good, &c.* And when, upon breaking his word, he was sent for by Solomon, the king reproached him for his perjury, for acting contrary to the condition of life which he himself had owned to be just and equitable, and for the wickedness that his heart was privy to, in his conduct to his father David; the mercy that had been shewed him in the pardon of that offence, aggravating his fresh crime in disobeying the king's command;

seemed very thankful for his life on these conditions: *The saying, (said he) is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do.* For some time Shimei kept himself within the bounds of his confinement, but a circumstance at length occurred, that induced him to break through his obligation, and thereby subject himself to the forfeiture of his life. Some of his slaves having ran away from him, and entered themselves into the service of Achish, king of Gath, he imprudently went to reclaim them, information of which being given to Solomon, on his return he ordered him immediately to be put to death, which was accordingly done by the hands of Benaiah his general.

Solomon having thus secured himself on his throne by taking off the heads of the faction who were against him, resolved to strengthen his power by a foreign alliance, which he did by marrying the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt §. After this he rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, which he made much larger and stronger than before, and erected fortifications, in different parts, for its better security.

Solomon, though young in years, strictly obeyed the commands of his dying father. He lived religiously, paid great attention to the administration of justice, and preserved inviolate the laws of his country. Desirous of making his acknowledgments to God for the great benefits he had received at his hands, he went to Gibeon (where the original tabernacle and altar made in the wilderness were kept) and there offered up a thousand || sacrifices to the Lord.

This

a crime, that shewed he was of a restless spirit, and incapable of being restrained within due bounds by the most solemn oaths, or any sense of interest, gratitude or duty whatsoever. Solomon adds, (ver. 44, 45.) *The Lord shall return thy wickedness, &c.* plainly intimating that Solomon now cut him off, as an act of prudence and justice to a restless implacable enemy to his person and government, and that he saw it necessary so to do for *establishing the throne of David before the Lord.*

§ This part of Solomon's conduct has been censured by different commentators, who observe, that whatever augmentation of power he might promise himself from this alliance, he certainly ran the hazard of having his religion corrupted. In answer to this we have to observe, that there is no doubt but this princess, when she was espoused to Solomon, quitted the religion of her ancestors, to which Psalm xlv. 10, 11, is thought to allude. It is certain that we do not find Solomon anywhere reprov'd in scripture for making this match; nor can we think that his book of Canticles, which is supposed to be his epithalamium, would have found a place in the sacred canon, had the spouse, whom it all along celebrates, been at that time an idolatress. It may seem strange that in all the history of the Jews, from the time of Moses to that of Solomon, no mention should be made of the kings of Egypt, as if they had no concern in the affairs of Canaan, but were wholly diverted some other way: but for this their own historians account, when they tell us that, during this space of time, the "Egyptian kings did nothing worth recording." Clemens Alexandrinus, in a passage taken from Alexander Polyhistor, tells us, that the proper name of this Egyptian king, whose daughter Solomon married, was Vaphres.

|| It is not reasonable to suppose that the thousand sacrifices which Solomon is said to have made here, were offered in one day. The king, we may imagine, upon one of the great festivals, went in procession with his nobles to pay his devotion in Gibeon. Each of the great festivals lasted seven days; but Solomon might stay much longer at Gibeon, until, by the daily oblations, a thousand burnt-offerings might be consumed.

This distinguished piety was so acceptable to God, that the night following he appeared to him in a vision, and promised to grant whatever he should ask. Solomon said, "Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David, my father, great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child*: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give, therefore, thy servant, an understanding heart, to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"

The Almighty was so well pleased with the nature of the request made by Solomon, that he not only promised him the wisdom he asked, but likewise that he should have such an abundance of riches and honour as should not be equalled by any monarch on earth. When Solomon awoke he found it to be a dream sent from God; and therefore, returning to Jerusalem, he immediately went to the Ark of the Covenant (which was placed in a tabernacle that had been made for it by David) and there offered up sacrifices in abundance.

* It is plain that Solomon means here that he was only a little child, a mere infant in understanding and abilities to guide and govern so great a people. See Psalm cxxxi. 2. The phrase *to go out or come in* is not only an Hebraism frequent in the sacred writings, but also a similitude taken from a little child yet unable to walk firmly, and ignorant of all things; such as Solomon here professes himself to be, as the ruler of so great a people. It is generally agreed that he was about twenty years of age when he began to reign. Though Solomon in his great modesty might request of God no more than the gift of government, or, as he expresses it, *an understanding heart, to judge the people, and to discern between good and bad*; yet God, out of his abundant grace, gave him a general knowledge of all other things, as the following history informs us; and that, whereas other men gather their knowledge from study and observation, Solomon had his by an immediate inspiration from God; inasmuch that he who went to bed, as ignorant as other men, awaked in the morning as an angel of God. But though his knowledge of things was in a great measure infused, yet he did not therefore neglect his study: *he gave his heart to seek, and search out by his wisdom, concerning all things under the sun*; in which search, as himself testifies, Eccles. i. 13. he took no small pains: so that his gifts extraordinary did not supercede the use of other means in the acquisition of knowledge; but by application and experience, he perfected what he had so advantageously received from the hands of God.

† Solomon knew at once that the only sign whereby to discover the true mother would be her affection and compassionate tenderness for the child; and therefore, in order to distinguish between the two, his business was to make trial of them. And if we suppose, that when he commanded the child to be divided, he spoke with a sedate countenance and seeming earnestness (as the true mother's petition to the king makes it apparent he did) then we may suppose farther, that not only the two women, but all the people present, were struck with horror at the thoughts of the design being carried into execution; which, when it ended in so just a decision, quite contrary to what they expected, raised joy in every breast, and gave a more advantageous commendation to the judge. It is the opinion of some, that Solomon made

A short time after this an opportunity offered, which fully displayed the great wisdom the Almighty had been pleased to give to Solomon in conformity to his Divine promise. Two women, who lived together in one house, were brought to bed about the same time, one of whom, having overlaid her child, took the living one privately from the other woman, and placed her dead child in its stead. She who found the dead child by her accused the other of having stolen her living one, and left her own dead child in its stead. The other strongly denied the accusation; so that the question was, to whom did the living child belong? In order to determine this dispute they went to the king, when each having related her tale, and made a claim to the living child, the king called for one of his guards, and ordered him to cut it asunder, that it might be divided between the two claimants †. In consequence of this the real mother of the living child earnestly begged that it might be saved, even though it should be given to her adversary, while the pretended one was for having the king's orders put in execution. Solomon was so well convinced that she who had expressed such a tenderness and compassion for the living child was the real mother, that he ordered it immediately to be delivered to her, and chastised the other woman for her wickedness, in having first killed her own child, and being afterwards desirous of the death of that of her friend ‡. This determination was so singular an instance of the king's great sagacity and wisdom, that the

a discovery of the truth antecedent to this experiment: that by observing the countenance, the manner of speech, and all the motions of the women, he discerned the secrets of their hearts, and penetrated to the bottom of the business; and that his commanding the child to be divided afterwards was only to notify to the company what he before had discovered. However this be, it may not be improper upon this occasion to mention an instance or two out of profane history, of as singular addresses, though much inferior to this, in discovering such secrets as seemed to be past finding out. Suetonius, in his life of Claudian, tells us, that emperor discovered a woman to be the mother of a young man, whom she would not own for her son, by commanding her to be married to him; the horror of committing incest having obliged her to declare the truth. In like manner Diodorus Siculus relates, that Ariopharnes, king of the Thracians, being appointed to arbitrate between three men, who all pretended to be sons of the king of the Cimmerians, and claimed the succession, found out the true son and heir, by ordering them to shoot each man his arrow into the dead king's body, which one of them refusing to do, was deemed the lawful claimant.

† The whole of this singular contest between the two women, their representation of it to Solomon, and his peculiar method of determining it, may be thus paraphrased:

In contest fierce two women storm aloud,
And force their passage thro' the yielding croud,
The monarch's throne with eager haste they gain'd;
The monarch's presence scarce their rage restrain'd;
Silent they stand, all impotent in woe,
While down their cheeks the trick'ling torrents flow.
The first, a lively, vig'rous infant bears,
Fruit of her fraud, but solace of her cares.
The next a livid, senseless corse embrac'd
(Death's ghastly terrors all its form defac'd)
'Tow'rd the high throne with fierce access she flies,
While tears of rage stood trembling in her eyes,
A sigh that instant from her bosom broke,
Another follow'd, and at length she spoke:
"Attend, O monarch! nor disdain to hear
"A wretched woman with impartial ear;

the people ever after considered him as a prince totally guided by Divine impulse.

The wisdom of Solomon, added to the great propriety of his conduct in the administration of public affairs, soon spread a happy influence over all his dominions, and every subject was, in some degree or other, made partaker of it. All Judah and Israel lived in the greatest security; and all the neighbouring nations either paid him tribute, or were his friends and allies. He ruled over all the countries and kingdoms from the Euphrates to the Nile, and in many places his dominions extended much farther. He lived in greater splendor than any of his predecessors had done. The daily allowance of provision for his table consisted of thirty measures of fine flour, threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, twenty others from the pasture, and an hundred sheep, besides fowls, deer, and other articles.

In this pompous manner did Solomon live be-

loved by his people, dedicating his time to their interest and welfare. He gave daily instances of the great increase of his wisdom, and in learning and knowledge surpassed even the Egyptians, who had hitherto been reputed the most discerning people on the earth §. In short, he was esteemed the wisest of mankind, and his reputation was spread throughout every nation. He composed three thousand proverbs, and one thousand and five poems. He knew the virtues of all plants and trees, from the highest to the lowest; and in his writings treated on the nature of all kinds of beasts, birds, reptiles and fishes ||. So universal was his knowledge, and so great his fame, that he was held in esteem by the princes of all countries, many of whom sent their ambassadors to Jerusalem to pay him reverence.

When Hiram, king of Tyre (son of him who sent David timber and artificers to build his palace)

" If e'er compassion touch'd thy royal breast,
" If e'er thou knew'st to pity the distressed;
" Pity, ah! pity this my load of grief,
" Justice is all I ask for my relief.
" That woman view—of all my woes the cause,
" Who dar'd to violate thy sacred laws.
" One common house, one common fate we share
" One common board supplies our daily fare,
" And once two tender babes employ'd our care. }
" —'Twas silence all—when not a gleam of light
" Shot through the solid darkness of the night.
" Crush'd with unusual load, her infant lay
" A lifeless corpse—the spirit wing'd its way:
" That curs'd impostor, practis'd to entice,
" By long experience in the paths of vice:
" That monster—tore my infant from my arms,
" Blooming in youth, and fresh with vigorous charms.
" Soon as Aurora usher'd in the light,
" Sudden these clay-cold limbs distract my sight!"
Thus while she spoke with fierce collected ire
The other burns—her eye-balls flash with fire.
Now anguish, wrath, and grief, to passion wrought,
Despair and secret shame, and conscious thought
Of impious guilt, her lab'ring soul oppress'd,
Roll'd in her eyes, and rag'd within her breast.
First she stood dumb—at length the fury woke,
The struggling storm found vent, and thus she spoke:
" Is't, then, in vain in truth itself to trust?
" And is it thus the gods assist the just?
" Hell! burst, rage, roar aloud with hideous cry,
" If thou art half so mad, so hot as I.
" Patience, be gone! shall I, shall I resign
" My darling child, the child so justly mine!"

Thus wild she rav'd: distracted was her walk,
Mad were her motions, and confus'd her talk.
Fiditious madness! such a false disguise
Might well have baffled less discerning eyes;
But vain her arts, her plotted measures fail;
For heav'nly wisdom penetrates the veil
Of mortal fraud: such pow'r Divine was giv'n,
And such are mortals when oppos'd to heav'n.

The king demands a sword—the guards obey,
And at his feet the fatal weapon lay:

" Let this, said he, the dubious cause decide;
" In equal parts the living child divide."
Now, threat'ning fate the deadly weapon stood
High poiz'd in air, and seem'd to thirst for blood.
When thus th' impostor: " Just is the decree,
" Thy words give joy, and wisdom breathes in thee:
" Strike, strike at once, the long contention end,
" With instant ruin let the sword descend!"

The genuine mother, trembling for her son,
Averts the impending blow, and thus begun:
" Was it, perfidious! was it, then, decreed,
" That only I must for thy falsehood bleed?
" Canst thou, forgetful of thy crime, begin
" To slight my ruin, and enjoy the sin?—
" Since *your* lov'd infant has resign'd its breath,
" And lies benumb'd in the cold arms of death,

" Take this sad offspring of my fruitless throes,
" Leave me to pine in grief and endless woes,
" Ere to the sword my darling I resign,
" Mine be the shame, the happy conquest thine."
" Enough, 'tis plain, the sapient monarch cries,
" E'en nature's self points out to whom's the prize:
" *Whose* soul relenting with compassion burnt,
" *Whose* tender bowels on her offspring yearnt,
" *Who* first, by nature's pow'ful instinct sway'd,
" Sav'd her dear infant from the threat'ning blade;
" Let her receive the child—let contest cease,
" And diff'rent nations part in leagues of peace."
Thus he, while thro' the court loud shouts arise,
And acclamations read the lofty skies;
O'er the wide earth was spread the rising fame,
And distant shores resound the monarch's name.

§ There were three nations in the east of Canaan, which were very famous for their wisdom and erudition: the Chaldeans, beyond the Euphrates, the Persians beyond the Tigris, and the Arabians, on the nearer side of the Euphrates, a little towards the south: but whether the Persians and Chaldeans were remarkable for their learning in Solomon's days, is much doubted among commentators. The book of Job sufficiently shews that the Arabians (for of that nation was Job and his friends) were famous for their learning in ancient times: and as to the Chaldeans and other oriental people, since the sons of Noah took up their habitation about Babylon and the neighbouring countries, it is reasonable to suppose, that where mankind first began to settle themselves into regular societies, there arts and sciences first began to appear. The Egyptians, however, pretend to precedency in this and several other accomplishments. They say that the Chaldeans received the principles of philosophy at first from a colony which came from Egypt, as Diodorus Siculus indeed makes mention of such a colony, conducted by Belus. But the Chaldeans, on the other hand, maintain, that from them it was that the Egyptians received their first instructions, and, according to some, that Abraham was the person who first communicated to the Chaldeans the knowledge of astronomy and other sciences. However this be, Solomon received from God a perfect knowledge of all that useful and solid learning, for which the eastern people and the Egyptians were justly famed; for, (as it follows) he was a great moral philosopher, a great natural philosopher, and an excellent poet.

|| The several books which treated of the nature and virtue of animals, as well as plants, are supposed to have been lost in the Babylonish captivity; but Eusebius informs us, that king Hezekiah, seeing the abuse which his subjects made of Solomon's works, by placing too much confidence in the remedies which he prescribed, and the natural secrets which he discovered, thought proper to suppress them all. But notwithstanding this, since his time, many wicked and pernicious books concerning the secrets of magic, medicines, and enchantments, have appeared under the name of this prince, in order to gain the more credit and sanction.

lace) heard of the death of the late king, for whom he had the greatest affection, he sent ambassadors to Solomon, to condole with him on his father's death, and congratulate him on his accession to the throne. By the return of these messengers Solomon sent Hiram a letter; the substance of which was to this effect:

King SOLOMON to King HIRAM.

"Be it known to you, O king, that my father was desirous of erecting a temple to the worship of God; but he was prevented from executing his design by being perpetually engaged in war, from which he never ceased till he had made his enemies his tributaries. I thank God for the peaceable state in which he left me, and having now a proper opportunity, I purpose to erect a temple, which the Almighty was pleased to foretel my father should be done by me. My request, therefore, is, that you will let some of your people go with my servants to Mount Libanus, to assist them in cutting down materials for the building, as I am sensible they are better acquainted with that business than my subjects: and as for wages, whatever you think reasonable shall be punctually paid."

King HIRAM to King SOLOMON.

"It gives me the greatest pleasure to think that the government of your blessed father has, by God's Providence, (for which his holy name be praised) fallen into the hands of so virtuous and excellent a prince. The request in your letter shall be diligently attended to: I will order the fairest and tallest cedars and cypress trees to be cut down, and carried to the sea-side, where proper vessels shall be provided to carry them to such port as you may think proper to direct, from whence they may be conveyed by your people, to Jerusalem. In return for this, I shall esteem it a very singular obligation if you will supply us with such a quantity of corn as you can conveniently spare, being greatly distressed for want of that necessary article."

On the receipt of this letter Solomon was so well pleased with the generous frankness of Hiram, that, in return, he ordered to be sent him, annually, twenty thousand measures of wheat, and twenty measures of pure oil. And this was the first earnest of that friendship which afterwards became permanent between these two monarchs.

Matters being thus agreed on, Solomon ap-

pointed 30,000 men to assist those of the king of Tyre in cutting down wood on Mount Libanus; but only 10,000 were sent at a time, who, after staying a month, returned to their homes, and ten thousand others were sent in their stead: so that each division by thus taking their turns alternately, were only one month abroad, and two at home. Besides these, Solomon employed 70,000 profelytes (who were the remains of the antient Canaanites) in carrying burthens on their shoulders; 80,000 in cutting stone out of the quarries; and 3,600 in overseeing the work. And, to finish the inner part of the temple, as well as frame some of its choicest vessels Hiram sent him a most skilful artist of his own name, whose mother was of the tribe of Dan, but his father a Tyrian. The great abilities of this man were such, that they extended to all kinds of works, whether in gold, silver, brass, or iron, whether in linen, tapestry, or embroidery; and by his direction all the curious furniture of the temple was both designed and finished.

All things being ready for building the temple, the foundation was laid in the fourth year of king Solomon's reign, in the month Zif, which answers to our March, 480 years after the children of Israel came out of Egypt, in the year of the world 2992, and 1012 before Christ. It was finished in the eleventh year of Solomon's reign, in the month Bul (or October) so that it was seven years and an half in building†. The whole was compleated with such dexterity, that neither hammer nor ax, nor any tool of iron was heard during the whole time of its being erected; such admirable care and contrivance was used in preparing and adjusting the respective materials.

But before we proceed to give a description of this famous building, it may not be improper to take some notice of the situation and antient state of the city of Jerusalem, which, at the time of the temple being erected, was in its greatest splendor.

The city of Jerusalem was built upon two hills, and encompassed all round with mountains. It was situated in a barren and stony soil; but the places adjacent were well watered, having the fountains of Gihon and Siloam, and the brook Kidron at the foot of its walls. Jebus, (or the original city which David took) was seated on a hill towards the south; and, on the opposite quarter, towards the north, was Mount Zion, where David built his new city, and called it after his own name, and where likewise stood his royal palace, as also the temple of the Lord; for

* If it should be asked, why Solomon did not begin the building of the temple sooner, since his father had left him a plan, and all things necessary for the undertaking? it may be answered, that the materials his father had provided lay rude and unfashioned, and at a considerable distance: this time was therefore requisite to form them into the exact symmetry and order in which the scripture represents them; especially as the very stones, which made the foundation, were probably vast blocks of marble or porphyry, and all polished in the most exquisite manner. Therefore four years cannot be accounted an unreasonable time, to gather gold and silver sufficient to defray so vast an expence.

† The temple itself, indeed, was but a small edifice, but

the many courts and offices that were about it made the whole a prodigious pile, and the exquisiteness of the art, with the small number of artists employed about it, made a longer time requisite. It must, however, be acknowledged that, considering all things, Solomon made an extraordinary dispatch: for if the building of Diana's temple at Ephesus employed all the people of Asia for the space of two hundred years, and no less than three hundred and sixty thousand men, for twenty years together, were employed in erecting one pyramid (as Pliny affirms) no reasonable person can wonder that this temple was seven years and an half in building, but, on the contrary, will be surprized to think it could have been done in so short a time.

for the temple was built on Mount Moriah, which was one of the hills belonging to Mount Zion.

Between these two mountains lay the Valley of Millo, which formerly separated antient Jebus from the City of David, but was afterwards filled up by David and Solomon, to make a communication between the two cities. But besides this Valley of Millo, we read in Scripture of the House of Millo †, which is said to be in the City of David §, and therefore was built either on Mount Zion, or some adjacent place.

With respect to the house of Millo (as we have no description of such a building) it may not be improper to make some enquiry what could be meant by it. The word Millo is thought to be derived from a Hebrew root, which signifies *to be full*, and is therefore, in the Sacred History, supposed to denote *a large capacious place*, designed for public meetings, or, in short, a senate-house. That this was some edifice of a public nature may be inferred from the notice that is taken of it among some others of Solomon's public buildings, where, the reason of the tax which he levied upon his subjects is said to be this, "that he might build the house of the Lord, and his own house, and Millo, and the walls of Jerusalem, &c. (1 Kings ix. 15.) Since, therefore, we cannot but suppose that it was a building of a very public nature; and since we find farther, that the servants of king Joash (2 Kings xii. 20.) arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew him in the house of Millo (very probably when he was come thither to debate, and consult with his princes and other chief men) it seems to be incontestible that this House of Millo was erected for a public senate-house, though, at the same time, there is reason to imagine, it might likewise be used for other purposes.

In the reign of Hezekiah, when Senacherib marched against Jerusalem with a design of besieging it, the king took counsel with his princes, and, among other things that were thought proper for his defence, it is said, that *he built up all the wall that was broken, and repaired Millo, and made darts and shields in abundance.* 2. Chron. xxxii. 5. And from hence we may infer, that this Millo was a place of great consequence to the strength of Jerusalem, and, very probably, was made to answer two purposes, namely, as a senate-house for public debates, and an arsenal for the reception of military stores.

The palace built by David for himself (to which was added that built by his son Solomon for the king of Egypt's daughter) must certainly have been a very magnificent structure, since he had both his workmen and materials sent from Old Tyre, which, at that time, surpassed all other nations in the art of building. But of this we can give no other account than that it stood westward from the temple, and consisted of a large square court, defended by flankers: from one of these was the descent by stairs into the gardens, which, in all probability, were watered by the fountain of Siloam.

The fountain of Siloam rises just beneath the

walls of Jerusalem, on the east side thereof, between the city and the brook Kidron; and was probably the same with the fountain Enrogel, or the Fuller's fountain, whereof we find mention in Joshua, xv. 7. and in the books of Samuel, and the Kings. Some travellers will have it, that the water of this fountain is brackish, and has not a good taste; but the prophet Isaiah, when he utters the complaint of God against the Jews, *forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloh, which go softly, &c.* seems to denote the contrary. However this be, St. Jerom himself affirms, that the waters of this fountain made the Valley, through which they ran, (as watering the gardens and plantations that were there) very pleasant and delightful.

The fountain of Gihon, which sprang very probably from an adjacent hill of the same name, was on the west side of Jerusalem; and as king Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxxii. 30.) ordered the upper channel of this fountain to be conveyed into Jerusalem, that when the city was besieged, the enemy might not have the benefit of its waters; so we need not doubt, but that the other spring of Siloam was, in like manner, conveyed into the city, and that, for the convenience of its inhabitants, they were both, in several places, distributed into pools; tho' some make that of Siloam to be without the walls.

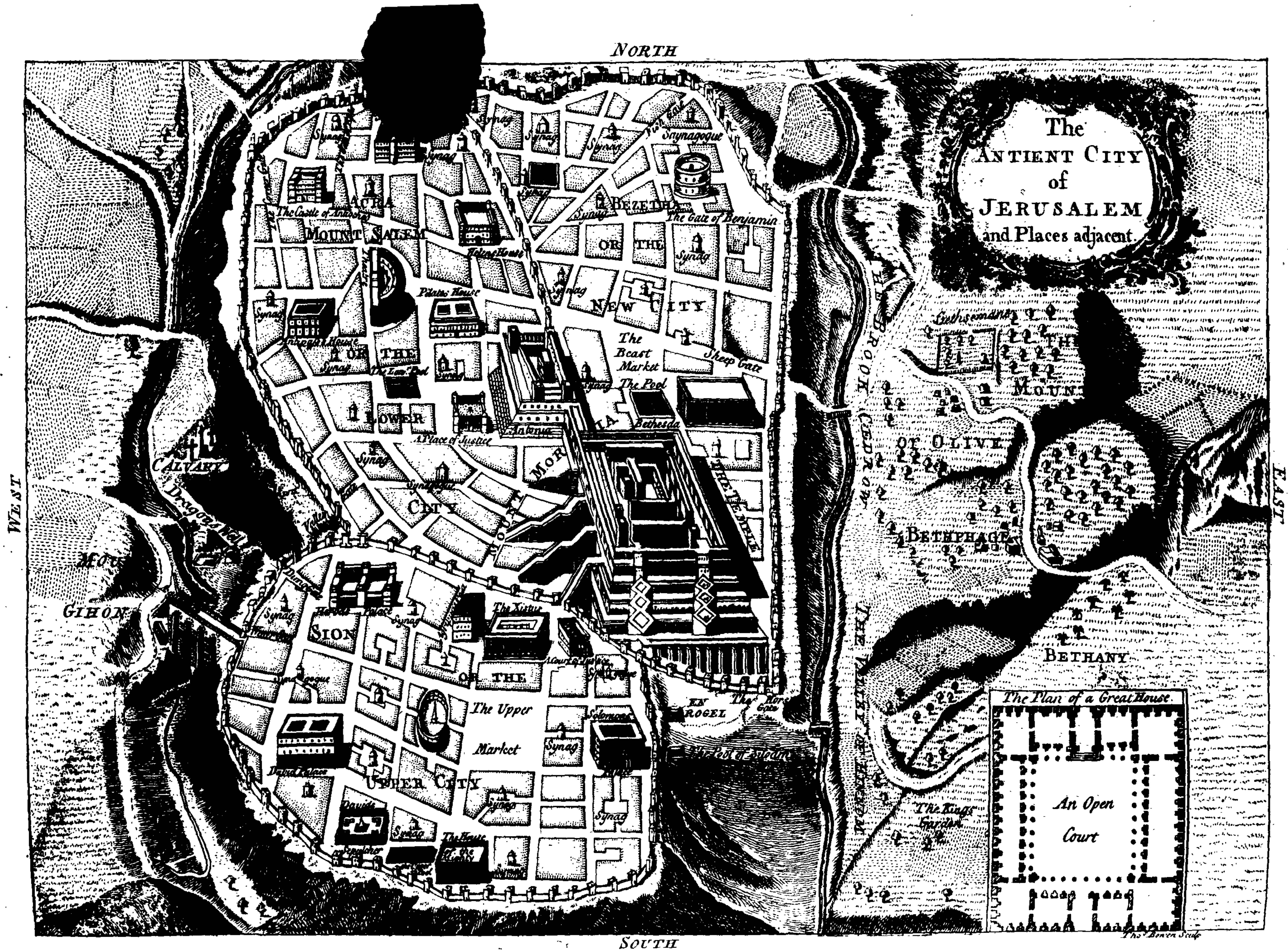
The brook Kidron ran in the Valley of Jehosaphat, on the east of Jerusalem, between the city, and Mount Olivet. It had usually no great quantity of water in it, and was frequently quite dry; but, upon any sudden rains, it swelled exceedingly, and ran with great impetuosity. It was indeed of singular service to the antient city, as it received its common-sewers, and, upon every violent flood, emptied them into the Dead-sea.

Mount Olivet, or the Mount of Olives, (which doubtless had its name from the great quantity of olive-trees that grew there) was situated to the east of Jerusalem, and parted from the city only by the Valley of Jehosaphat, and the Brook Kidron; for which reason, it is said to be a Sabbath-day's journey, i. e. about a mile from it. It was on this mountain that Solomon built temples to the Gods of the Ammonites, and of the Moabites, in compliance to his wives, who were natives of these nations; and for this reason it is likewise called in scripture, the Mount of Corruption, because such as follow vain idols are frequently said in scripture to, *corrupt themselves.* Some indeed have imagined, that this mount of corruption was a distinct place, but the matter of fact is, that Mount Olivet had three summits, or was made up of three several mountains, ranged one after another, from north to south. The middle summit was that, from which our Lord *ascended*; towards the south was that, whereon Solomon *set up his Abominations*, (2 Kings xxxiii. 13.) and towards the north was the highest of all, which was commonly called Galilee.

Mount Calvary, which, to all appearance, had its name from the similitude it bore to the figure

† 2 Kings xii. 20.

§ 2 Chron. xxxii. 5.



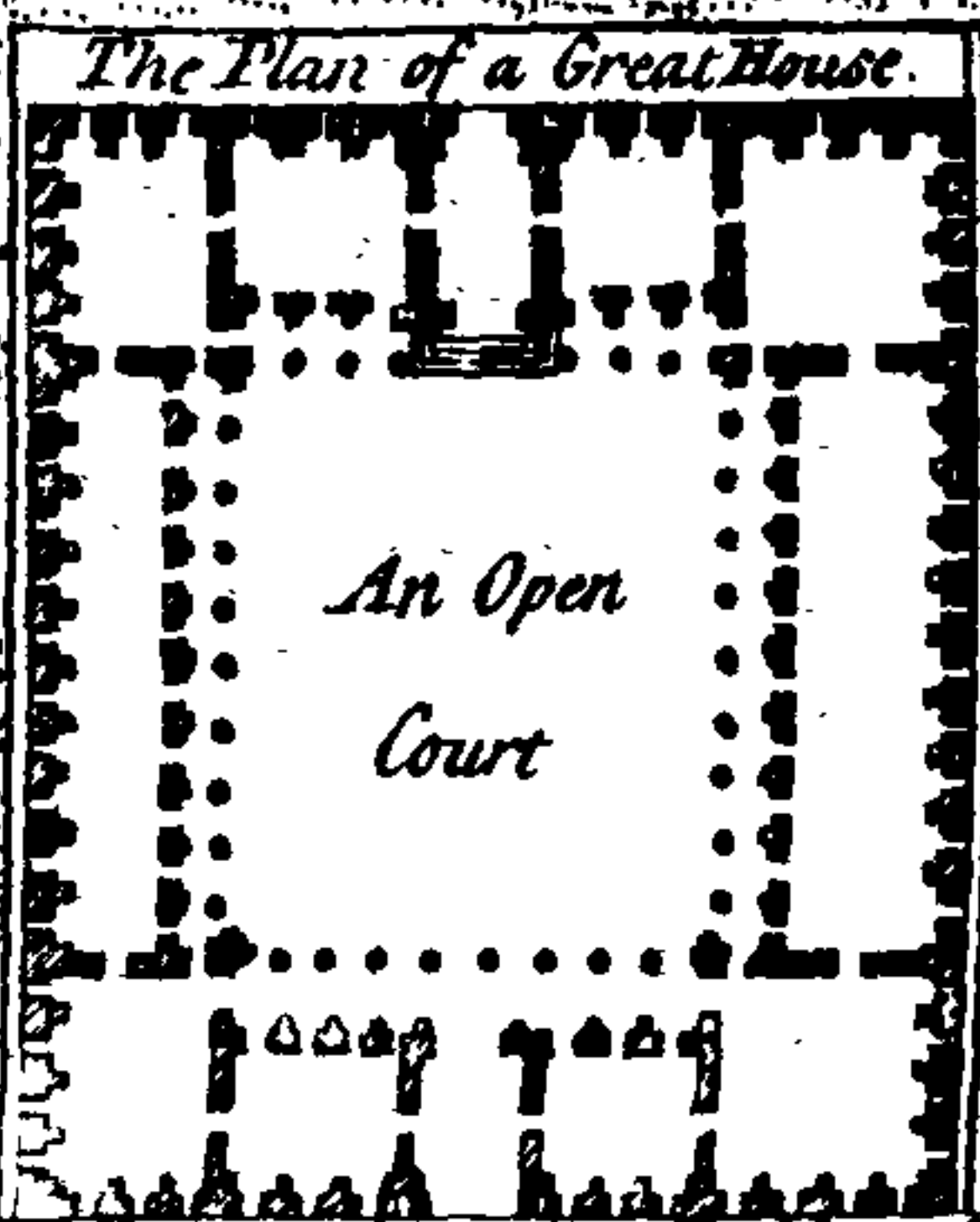
NORTH

The
ANTIENT CITY
of
JERUSALEM
and Places adjacent

WEST

EAST

SOUTH



of a skull, or man's head, was to the west of the antient Jerusalem, just without the gates: and, as our Saviour suffered there, we may presume it was the common place, where criminals of all kinds were generally executed.

The Valley of Hinnon, or of the sons of Hinnon, lay to the south of the city, and was remarkable for the cruel and barbarous worship of Moloch, where parents made *their children pass thro' the fire, or be burnt in the fire*, by way of sacrifice to that Idol; and where it was usual to have musical instruments (from whence it obtained likewise the name of Tophet, the Hebrew word Toph signifying the same as Tympanum in Latin, and Timbrel in English) to drown the lamentable shrieks of the children thus sacrificed. In this place there was afterwards kept a perpetual fire, to consume the dead carcases which were brought from Jerusalem; and therefore our Saviour, alluding to this, calls Hell by the name of Ge-henna, or the Valley of Hinnon.

The Valley of Jehosaphat, (which is likewise called the Valley of Kidron, because of the before-mentioned brook which ran through it) lay on the east of Jerusalem, between the city and the mount of Olives; and near this spot it was that Our Saviour ascended into heaven.

There is another Valley, that the scripture makes early mention of, and that is, *the Valley of Shaveth*, which is likewise called *the King's Dale*, (Gen. xiv. 17.) where *Melchizedeck met Abraham, in his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer*. According to Josephus, it was, in his time but about two furlongs distant from Jerusalem, and for this reason perhaps, it has been thought by some, to be no other, than the Valley of Jehosaphat; tho' others make it different, yet so, as to come up near to the said Valley, and to lie on the south-east part of the city, nor far from the king's gardens. Why it obtained the name of *the King's Dale*, whether it was from its near situation to the king's palace and gardens, or from its being the place, where the kings were accustomed to exercise themselves, or to be entertained by seeing others perform their exercises of running, riding and the like, is not agreed, and, in all probability, will never be determined.

According to the Scripture accounts there were several gates belonging to the antient city of Jerusalem; but their respective situations (not being particularized) cannot be, with certainty, determined. There is reason, likewise, to believe that their names have been varied, or that one and the same gate has gone under different appellations. As there were several circuits of walls belonging to the city, it is more than probable, that some of these gates did not lead out of the city into the country, but only from one division to another.

The *Gate of the Valley*, which, doubtless, had its name from leading into some valley, (and, as some travellers will have it, to the Valley of Jehosaphat) was situated on the east side of the city.

The *Dung-gate*, (which appears to have received its name from the dung and filth of the beasts that were sacrificed at the temple being carried out of it) was probably the same with that which is so called at this time, and, as well

as the *Gate of the Valley*, was situated on the east side of the city.

The *Water-gate* (which took its name from the water being conveyed through it into the city) was likewise situated on the same side; as was also the *Gate of the Fountain* (so called from its near situation to the fountain of Siloam) except that it inclined a little towards the south.

The *Gate of Ephraim* stood on the north side of the city, and was so called from its opening to the main road leading to that part of the country where the tribe of Ephraim were situated.

The *Horse-gate*, *Sheep-gate*, and *Fish-gate* are supposed to have received their names from the several markets of these creatures held on the respective spots assigned for those purposes. The two former were situated on the east side of the city, and the latter on the north.

The *High-gate*, or the *Gate of Benjamin* (so called, from its situation towards the land or tribe of Benjamin) is supposed by some, to have been the principal gate of the royal palace; but from what we read concerning the prophet Jeremiah being grossly abused near this gate, it appears to have been situated by the *House of the Lord*. See Jeremiah xx. 2.

Having thus mentioned the respective gates of this antient city, we shall now proceed to take notice of its royal sepulchres, some remains of which are still existing. On the north side of the city (without the walls now, but then, probably within them) are several subterraneous chambers, which are wonderfully magnificent, and at present called *the Sepulchres of the kings*. These have been minutely described by several modern travellers (particularly Thevenot and Maundrel) all of whom give their relations in like manner, and to this effect:—"When you come to the place, you pass through an entry, hewed out of a rock, which admits you into an open court about twenty-six feet square, all cut out of the rock, which is of solid marble, and serves instead of walls. On the left of this court is a portico nine paces long, and four broad (with a kind of architrave running round its front) cut out of the same rock, as are likewise the pillars that support it. At the end of this portico there is a passage into the sepulchres, which (when you have crept through it with some difficulty) lets you into a large chamber of above four and twenty feet square. Its sides and ceiling are so exactly square, and its angles so just, that no architect, with levels and plummets, could build a room more regular. From this room you pass into six more, one within another, and all of the same fabrick with the first, except that the two innermost are deeper than the rest, and have a descent of about six or seven steps into them. In every one of these rooms (except the first) were coffins of stone, placed in niches, along the sides of the room, and mounted in all to about fifty."

This is, in all probability, the only real work that now remains of the Old Jerusalem; and, what makes it justly looked upon as a wonder is, that the ceiling, the doors, as well as all the rest, their hinges, posts, frames, &c. are all cut out of the same continued rock. It may, therefore,

fore, be worth our enquiry to what purposes these structures were used, and who, possibly, might be the persons deposited in them.

It is the opinion of the generality of those who have inspected these subterraneous structures; that they were not the sepulchres of the kings of Judah, because the Scripture tells us (1 Kings ii. 10. and xi. 43.) that David and Solomon, and most of their successors, were buried in the City of David; and yet these grotts lie without the gate of Damascus (as it is now called) at a considerable distance from that part of Jerusalem. But how far the City of David did formerly extend, or where we shall find any other signs of the places where David, and the other kings, his successors, were buried, we have not any hints given us. The Reverend Mr. Maundrel (from the following passage in Scripture, and *Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David*) is of opinion, that this was the place where Hezekiah, and the sons immediately born to David that were not deposited in the royal sepulchres, were buried. But it is much more probable (and what both the Syriac and Arabic versions seems to confirm) that, by the sons of David here we are not to understand his *immediate* sons, properly so called, but, rather, the kings that succeeded him. This is a form of speech frequently made use of by the Sacred Writers; and therefore the sense of *Hezekiah's being buried in the sepulchres of the sons of David* must be, that he was buried in the sepulchres of the kings descended from David.

To the opinions already given of these repositories of the dead, we shall add that of Le Bruyn, who supposes, they were the sepulchres of Manasseh, his son Amon, and his grandfather Josiah, kings of Judah. Of Manasseh, the Scripture expressly tells us, that *he was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzzah*, 2 Kings xxi. 18, 26.)

And of Amon it is said, that he was buried in the garden of Uzzah, which garden Manasseh might, very probably, purchase, and, being taken with the pleasantness of it, might there build him an house, which he is here called his own house, in contradistinction to his royal palace, which was built and inhabited by his ancestors on Mount Zion. Of Josiah, indeed, the sacred history does not say expressly, that he was buried here; all that it tells us is, that he *was buried in the sepulchres of his fathers*, but whether in the City of David, or in the garden of Uzzah, it makes no mention: And therefore, since both his father and grandfather were buried in this garden, there is reason to think, that Josiah was here buried likewise; especially considering, that, in one of these subterraneous rooms, (as Le Bruyn tells us) which seemed to be more lofty than the rest, there were three coffins curiously adorned with carved works, which he took to be the coffins of these three kings.

But of all the buildings, that antient Jerusalem had to boast of, the Temple, which David designed, and Solomon perfected, was the most magnificent. We are not however to imagine, that this Temple was built like one of our churches; for it did not consist of one single edifice, but of several courts and buildings, which

took up a great deal of ground. The place whereon it was erected, was the top of mount Moriah, and the building all together made an exact square of eight hundred cubits, or one thousand four hundred and sixty feet long on each side, exactly fronting the east, west, north, and south.

To make this building more firm and secure, it was thought necessary to begin the foundation at the bottom of the mount; so that the sides were three hundred and thirty-three cubits (or about 608 feet high) before they were raised to the level of the temple; and this afforded a most noble prospect towards the chief part of the city; which lay westward. It is impossible to compute the labour of laying this foundation, because it is impossible to tell how much of the mountain must, in some places, be removed, and in others filled up, to bring it to an exact square for so great a height. "The foundation (as Josephus tells us) was laid prodigiously deep; and the stones were not only of the largest size, but hard and firm enough to endure all weathers, and be proof against the worm. Besides this, they were so mortised into one another, and so wedged into the rock, that the strength and curiosity of the basis was not less admirable, than the intended superstructure, and the one was every way answerable to the other."

The ground-plot, upon which the temple was built, was a square of six hundred cubits every way. It was encompassed with a wall of six cubits high, and the same in breadth, and contained several buildings for different uses, surrounded with cloysters supported by marble pillars. Within this space was the Court of the Gentiles fifty cubits wide, and adorned, in like manner, with cloysters and pillars. To separate this court from the Court of the Israelites, there was a wall of five hundred cubits square. The Court of the Israelites was an hundred cubits. It was paved with marble of different colours, and had four gates, to every quarter one, and each rising with an ascent of seven steps. To separate this court from the Court of the Priests, there was a wall of two hundred cubits square; and the priests court was an hundred cubits, encompassed with cloysters, and apartments, where the priests, that attended the service of the temple, were used to live. This court had but three gates, to the east, to the north, and to the south, and were approached by an ascent of eight steps. These courts were all open, and without any covering, but, in case of rain, or other bad weather, the people could retire under the cloysters, that were supported with rows of pillars, and went round every court.

In the Israelites Court, over-against the gate of the Priests Court, was erected a throne for the king (which was a magnificent alcove) where he seated himself when he came to the temple.

In the Priests Court was the Altar of Burnt Offerings, which was much larger than that of the tabernacle, having ten brazen lavers four cubits high, each standing on ten bases. There was likewise a great basin (which the tabernacle had not) called the Brazen Sea: it was five cubits high, and ten cubits in diameter, and was supported

supported by twelve brazen oxen resting on bases, each of which had four wheels.

On the west side of the Altar of Burnt-Offerings was an ascent of twelve steps, which led to what may be properly called the Temple; and this consisted of three parts, namely, the *Porch*, the *Sanctuary*, and the *Holy of Holies*.

The *Porch* was about twelve cubits long and twenty broad, at the entrance of which stood the two famous pillars called Jachin and Boaz, whose names import, that *God alone was the support of the temple*; and its gate was fourteen cubits wide.

The *Sanctuary*, or Nave of the Temple, was forty cubits in length, and twenty in breadth. In it were the Altar of Incense, and the Table of Shew Bread; but because the temple was larger, and required more light than the tabernacle, instead of one, it had five golden candlesticks.

The *Holy of Holies* was a square room of twenty cubits, in which was placed the Ark of the Covenant, containing the two tables of stone, on which were engraved the ten commandments as delivered by God to Moses. The two cherubims were made of olive-wood covered with gold: they were ten cubits high, and their wings five cubits long: they stood upright, having their wings stretched out, one of each of which touched the wall on either side, and the other two met in the center, covering the Ark.

According to the account given by the celebrated Jewish Historian Josephus, round the temple, and against its walls, were built thirty cells, or little houses, which served as so many buttresses, and were, at the same time, no small ornament to it; for there were stories of these cells one above another, whereof the second was narrower than the first, and the third than the second, so that their roofs and ballustrades, being within each other, made three different terrasses (as it were) upon which a person might walk round the temple. Within, these little houses were ceiled with cedar, their walls were wainscotted with the same, and embellished with carving and fretwork, inlaid with gold, which, with their dazzling splendor, made every thing about them look truly magnificent.

Upon the whole, we may observe, that the glory of this temple did not consist in the bulk or largeness of it, (for in itself exclusive of the surrounding courts, it was but a small pile of building, no more than an hundred and fifty feet in length, and an hundred and five in breadth,) but its chief grandeur and excellency lay in its out-buildings and ornaments, in its workmanship, which was every where very curious, and its overlayings, which were vast and prodigious; for the overlaying of the *Holy of Holies* only, (which was a room but thirty feet square, and twenty high) amounted to six hun-

dred talents of gold, which comes to four millions three hundred and twenty thousand pounds of our sterling money.

We shall conclude our account of this famous building with the words of Josephus: "The whole frame, says he, was raised upon stones polished to the highest degree of perfection, and so artificially put together, that there was no joint to be discerned, no sign of any working tools being upon them; but the whole looked more like the work of Providence and Nature, than the product of Art, and human invention. As for the inside, whatever carving, gilding, embroidery, rich silks, and fine linen would do, of these there was the greatest profusion. The very floor of the temple was overlaid with beaten gold, the doors were larger, and proportioned to the height of the walls, twenty cubits broad, and still gold upon gold." *In a word, it was gold all over, and nothing was wanting, either within or without, that could contribute to the glory and magnificence of the work.*

To the beforementioned account given of the ancient state of Jerusalem, it may not be improper to subjoin a few observations relative to its present state, as given by that celebrated and much admired Geographer, *Charles Theodore Middleton, Esq.**

"Jerusalem (says he) is now about three miles in circumference, and lies in 31 deg. 50 min. north lat. and 36 deg. east long. and is situated on a very rocky mountain. The Turks (by whom it is at present inhabited) call it Cudsembaric. It is very thinly inhabited; the walls are weak and without bastions, and the ditch is very inconsiderable. The streets are narrow and the houses mean. Pilgrims and travellers, who flock from all parts either through devotion or out of curiosity, are the principal support of the city. A Turkish bassa resides here, to keep good order, collect the Grand Seignior's revenues, and protect the pilgrims from the insults of the Arabs.

"No European Christian is permitted to enter the city till the requisite duties are discharged; nor can a stranger safely stay here, without being upon good terms with the Latin fathers.

"The pilgrim's principal object is the church of the Holy Sepulchre, situated upon Mount Calvary. It is 100 paces in length, and 60 in breadth: the workmen were obliged to reduce the hill to a plain area, in order to lay the foundation; but great precaution was used not to alter any part of it, where Our Saviour's passion was concerned. The scene of the Crucifixion is left entire, being about twelve yards square, and stands at this day so much higher than the floor of the church, that it is ascended to by twenty-one steps. The Holy Sepulchre, which was originally a cave hewn out in the bottom of the rock, may

* The excellent Work, from which we have taken this extract, is the most modern on the subject, and contains many more particulars than what are related by other writers on the same subject. It is intitled, *A New and Complete System of Geography, containing a full, accurate, authentic and interesting Account and Description of Europe, Asia, Africa and America; as consisting of Continents, Islands, Oceans, Seas, Rivers, Lakes, Promontories, Capes, Bays, Peninsulas, Isthmuses,*

Gulphs, &c. and divided into Empires, Kingdoms, States and Republics. Embellished with upwards of One Hundred and Twenty superb Copper-Plates, engraved by the most celebrated Artists, consisting of Views, Maps, Land and Water Perspectives, Birds, Beasts, Fishes, &c. as also the various Dresses of the Inhabitants of different Countries, with their strange Ceremonies, Customs, Amusements, &c. Printed for J. COOKE, No. 17, Pater-noster-Row.

may be now compared to a grotto standing above ground, and having the rock cut away, and levelled all round. The walls of the church of the Holy Sepulchre are of stone, and the roof of cedar; the building is covered with a superb cupola, supported by sixteen large columns, and open at top. Over the altar there is another fine dome; the nave constitutes the choir, and the ailes of the church contain the most remarkable places where the circumstances of Our Saviour's Passion were transacted, together with the tombs of Godfrey and Baldwin, the two first Christian kings of Jerusalem. In the church of the Crucifixion, the hole is shewn in which it is said the cross was fixed. The altar has three crosses richly adorned on it, particularly with four lamps of immense value, which are kept constantly burning. The cloyster round the sepulchre is divided into sundry chapels. The Latins, who take care of the church, have apartments on the north-west side, but they are never suffered to go out, the Turks keeping the keys, and furnishing them with provisions through a wicket. Some grand ceremonies are performed at Easter, representing Christ's passion, crucifixion, death, and resurrection, of which take the following authentic account:

"At dusk the pilgrims and monks meet in the chapel of the apparition; the lights are extinguished, and a sermon is preached by one of the Latin priests; then each being furnished with a lighted taper, all walk in procession round the church. They stop first at the Pillar of Flagellation, where no hymn is sung, and a sermon preached: thence they proceed to the Chapel of the Prison, to hear another hymn and another sermon: at the Chapel of the Division of the Garment, to which they go next, no hymn is sung, but no sermon preached. They then proceed to the Chapel of Derision, the altar of which is supported by two pillars, and underneath is a piece of greyish marble, on which they say the soldiers placed Christ, when they crowned him with thorns, and mocked him, saying, "Hail,

king of the Jews!" Here a sermon is preached, and a fourth hymn sung. They next enter another chapel, parted from the former only by a curtain, and advancing to the east end, come to the very spot on which Our Redeemer was crucified. This chapel is covered all over with Mosaic work; and adorned with thirteen lamps, and a candlestick with twelve branches. An hymn is here sung, and a sermon preached on some text relative to the passion: then two friars, who personate Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, come with great solemnity to the cross, and take down the image that resembles Christ, which they put in a winding sheet, carry it to the stone of unction, and sing an hymn over it: a sermon is then preached in Arabic, and thus the ceremonies conclude.

"On Mount Moriah, in the south part of the city, stands the edifice called Solomon's Temple, which is situated upon the same spot as the antient temple; but it is uncertain by whom it was erected. The middle part, where the Jewish Sanctum Sanctorum was supposed to have stood, is converted into a Turkish mosque.

"It is to be observed, that the Turkish sangiac who governs this city, resides in the very house where Pontius Pilate is supposed to have formerly lived. The principal part of the churches have been converted into mosques. The priests and other Christians are kept miserably poor by the tyranny of the government, and have scarce any subsistence but what they procure by accommodating strangers with food and lodging, and selling them relics."

Such are the particulars of the present state of the city of Jerusalem itself as related by this celebrated Historian. As for the remarkable places in its neighbourhood, with other matters well worthy the attention of the curious, we must refer our readers to the work itself; it being now time to quit this digression, and resume our History.

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A NEW AND COMPLETE
UNIVERSAL HISTORY
OF THE
HOLY BIBLE.

BOOK III.

From the building of SOLOMON'S TEMPLE, to the BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY.

[Including a Period of upwards of 400 Years.]

CHAP. I.

Solomon places the Ark of God, and the Tabernacle, in the Temple. His solemn dedication of the temple, and prayer on the occasion. God appears to Solomon a second time in a dream. Solomon offers Hiram, king of Tyre, twenty cities, which he refuses to accept. He builds cities, and subdues the Hittites, Amorites, &c. Sends ships to Ophir, which bring from thence great quantities of gold. Receives a visit from the Queen of Sheba, who admires his wisdom, and, on her departure, makes him many valuable presents. His great riches. He is deluded by strange women, and falls into idolatry. God raises up against him Hadad and Rezon, and declares to Jeroboam, by the prophet Ahijah, that he shall reign over ten tribes. Jeroboam flies into Egypt. Death of Solomon.

THE great work of the temple being finished, Solomon, to celebrate the dedication of it with the greatest magnificence, postponed that ceremony till the following year, which was a year of jubilee, and at which time there always assembled a vast concourse of people from all

parts of the kingdom. On this occasion he sent messengers to all the elders of Israel, the princes of the different tribes, and the heads of the families, ordering them to repair to Jerusalem at the time appointed, which was a few days before the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles*.

The

* The feast of tabernacles lasted eight days, and was instituted as a memorial of the Israelites having dwelt in tents or tabernacles while they were in the desert. The principal ceremonies observed in the celebration of it were as follow: They dwelt, during the whole solemnity, in tents, or booths, made of boughs of trees, like bowers, in the open air. They offered every day a great number of sacrifices, besides the usual ones, of which there is a particular account in the 29th chapter of Numbers. During the whole time of the feast they carried in their hands branches of palm-trees, olives, citrons, myrtles and willows. These they tied together with gold or silver lines, or with ribbons, and going into their synagogues, walked round the altar with them in their hands, singing Hosannah, that is, *Save I beseech thee*; during which ceremony the trumpets sounded on all sides. On the seventh day of the feast they went seven times round the altar, and this was called the Great Hosannah. On the last day they repeated their Hosannah often, saying, "For thy

sake, O our Creator, Hosannah; for thy sake, O our Redeemer, Hosannah; for thy sake O our Seeker, Hosannah:" as if they addressed themselves to the Trinity to save and help them. But one of the most remarkable ceremonies performed at this feast was, the libations, or pouring out of the water, which was done every day. A priest went and drew some water in a golden vessel, at the pool of Siloam, which he poured on the altar (first mixing some wine with it) at the time of the morning service, the people, at the same time singing, *With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation*. Thus as this festival was commemorative of God's favour to his people while they dwelt in tents and tabernacles in the wilderness, and was designed to remind them of their short and pilgrim state here below (see Psalm xxxix. 12.) so did it foreshadow the future dwelling of the Messiah in the tabernacle of human flesh, whence their greatest comforts were to flow, and through whom they, and all mankind, were to receive the water of life, the spirit of grace.

The people being assembled, and all things ready, the ceremony began on the eighth day of the seventh month called Ethanim, which answers to the latter end of our October. It opened with a very grand and solemn procession, in which the priests carried the Ark from the place David had erected for it to the temple, where they deposited it in the most holy place, between the two golden cherubims which Solomon had caused to be made by Hiram, as a kind of covering to it. The king himself accompanied by all his chief officers, and the elders of Israel, marched before the Ark: these were followed by a great number of priests and Levites, who sung some canticles proper on the occasion, and played upon various instruments. Next to the Ark followed another body of singers and players, with other priests bearing the golden candlesticks, altar of incense, and other sacred utensils of the sanctuary; and last of all, the Tabernacle of the Congregation †. As the procession passed the priests offered sacrifices in various places, the number of which, on their way, and at the temple, after depositing the different articles in the parts allotted for them, amounted to 20,000 oxen, and 120,000 sheep ‡. While the priests were placing the Ark in the Holy of Holies, the air rang with the sound of trumpets, and the voices of the Levites, who sang the praises of God, repeating these words at proper stanzas: *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; and his mercy endureth for ever.*

No sooner had the priests left the Holy of Holies, where they had deposited the Ark, than the whole temple was covered with a miraculous cloud, so that the priests could not proceed far-

ther in celebrating the praises of God. This being observed by Solomon, he immediately concluded that what he had done was acceptable to the Lord, and that he had shewn this as a sign that he had taken possession of the place. He therefore threw himself prostrate on the ground, and in that situation continued for some time. At length he arose, and, turning towards the sanctuary, addressed himself in solemn prayer to God §, beseeching him graciously to accept of the house which he had built for his sake; to bless and sanctify it, and to hear the prayers of all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who, upon any occasion, either of public or private calamity, might direct their supplications to him from that holy place. He likewise besought of God that he would fulfil the promise which he had been pleased to make to his father David, in favour of his family, and the kings who should succeed him in the government of the people.— This most beautiful and solemn prayer is contained in the eighth chapter of the first book of Kings, beginning at the 23d and running to the 53d verse; and the whole of it may be thus paraphrased:

By thee, eternal God of truth I reign,
By thee at length I've rais'd the spacious fane,
Which David oft had vow'd, but vow'd in vain. }
The royal David, my victorious sire,
Deck'd in emblazon'd arms, and war's attire;
Inur'd to blood, and hostile cruelty,
Was not thought fit to build an house for thee:
Or on thy sacred altars to expand
A peaceful off'ring with a warrior's hand.
Yet I, his son, thou vow'dst should build thine house;
O God of truth, well hast thou paid thy vows!

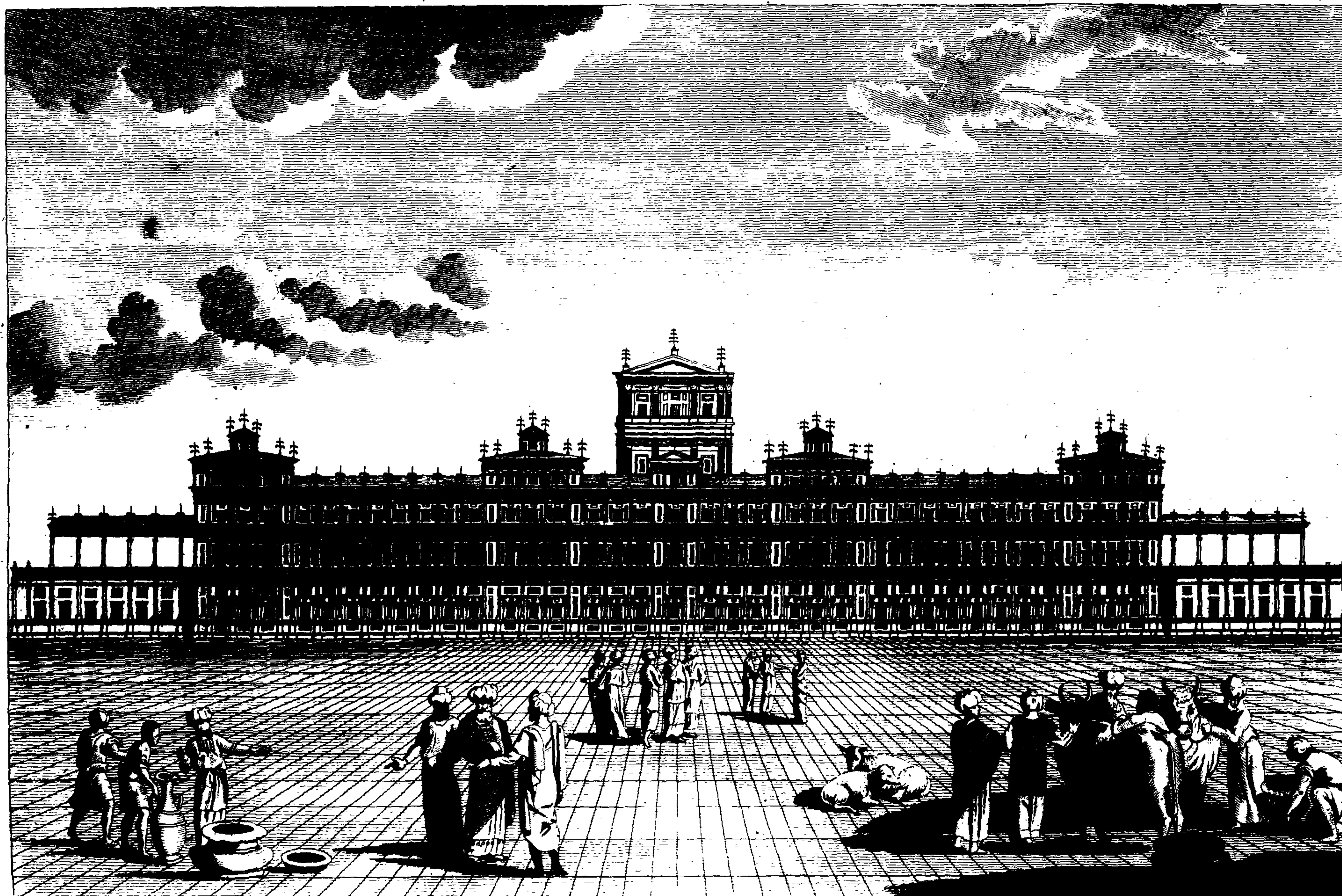
Hear

† This was the tabernacle built by Moses, which, for the prevention of schism, and to make the temple only the place of devotion, was now taken down and deposited in the treasury, where it continued till the taking of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; when (as Josephus informs us) God admonished Jeremiah to take it, together with the ark, and the altar of incense, and hide them in some secret place, for fear of profanation; and it is doubted whether they have ever yet been removed.

‡ We are not to suppose that so great a number of cattle could be offered all on the same day, much less on one altar. The continuance of this meeting was for fourteen days, seven in the feast of tabernacles, and seven in the dedication of the temple: and because the brazen altar before the door of the temple was not sufficient to receive all the sacrifices, Solomon ordered other altars to be erected in the court of the priests, and perhaps in other places, which were to serve only during this solemnity, when such a prodigious number of sacrifices were to be offered; for, at other times, no altar was allowed but the brazen one which had been made by Moses. It is, however, no bad observation of Josephus, that, during the oblation of so many sacrifices, the Levites took care to “ perfume the air with the fragrant of incense and sweet odours, to such a degree, that the people were sensible of it at a distance;” otherwise the burning of so many beasts at one time must have occasioned a very offensive scent.

§ The prayer Josephus puts into the mouth of Solomon on this occasion is to the following effect: “ Lord, says he, what are the most glorious works of man in balance even with the smallest of thy benefits and mercies? Or what can we, that have nothing to give, pretend to do for thee that wantest nothing? when the very least of thy bounties are above and beyond all requital? We can only render thee praise, acknowledgment and thanksgiving. and that, indeed, is a prerogative which thou hast vouchsafed to mankind above all other creatures: so that this I am not only allowed, but obliged to do, in the name of myself and family, and the whole people of Israel, for all thy multiplied favours and infinite goodness towards us. Now

“ having no other way of expressing our duty and affections, than by the means of bare empty words, that are only so much air drawn in and breathed out again, be pleased to accept of our humble gratitude in that human capacity: first, for thy gracious goodness to my dead father, in raising him from a shepherd's crook, to an imperial scepter; and, in the second place, for making good to thy servant Solomon all thy promises and predictions in his favour. Lord! continue thy bounties to us, as to thy chosen people: preserve, prosper, and perpetuate the government to our family by a constant train of successions, from generation to generation, according to thy promises to my father, living and dying. Lord! grant us all this; and to all mine, those virtues and graces that may make them acceptable in thy sight. I do farther most humbly beseech thee to let thy holy spirit descend upon this temple, in the blessing of thy peculiar presence. Heaven and earth I know are too little for the majesty of thy glory, and more the workmanship of men's hands in a fabrick of much wood and stone: and yet I cannot but presume to implore thy Providence and protection over it: Lord! preserve it from the power and rage of enemies; and be pleased to take care of it, as of thine own property and possession. And if at any time hereafter thou shalt be moved in thy just displeasure to punish this people for their transgressions, with famine, pestilence, or any other judgment whatever answerable to the degree of the wickedness, Lord! be pleased, upon their humble supplications to thee in thine own house, with prayers and tears, for mercy and forgiveness, to accept of their true repentance, and to remove thy judgments. This I most humbly beseech thee, not for the Hebrews alone, but for the relief indifferently of all people whatever, that shall offer up their petitions to thee in this holy place. By these means it will appear to the whole world that this is thy house, and we thy people: and that the Hebrews are not so inhumane as to envy strangers the common dispensations of the Author and Fountain of all our happiness.”



An exact representation of SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

II
Chronicles
Ch. IV.



The Golden Altar of Incense.



The Table of Shew Bread.



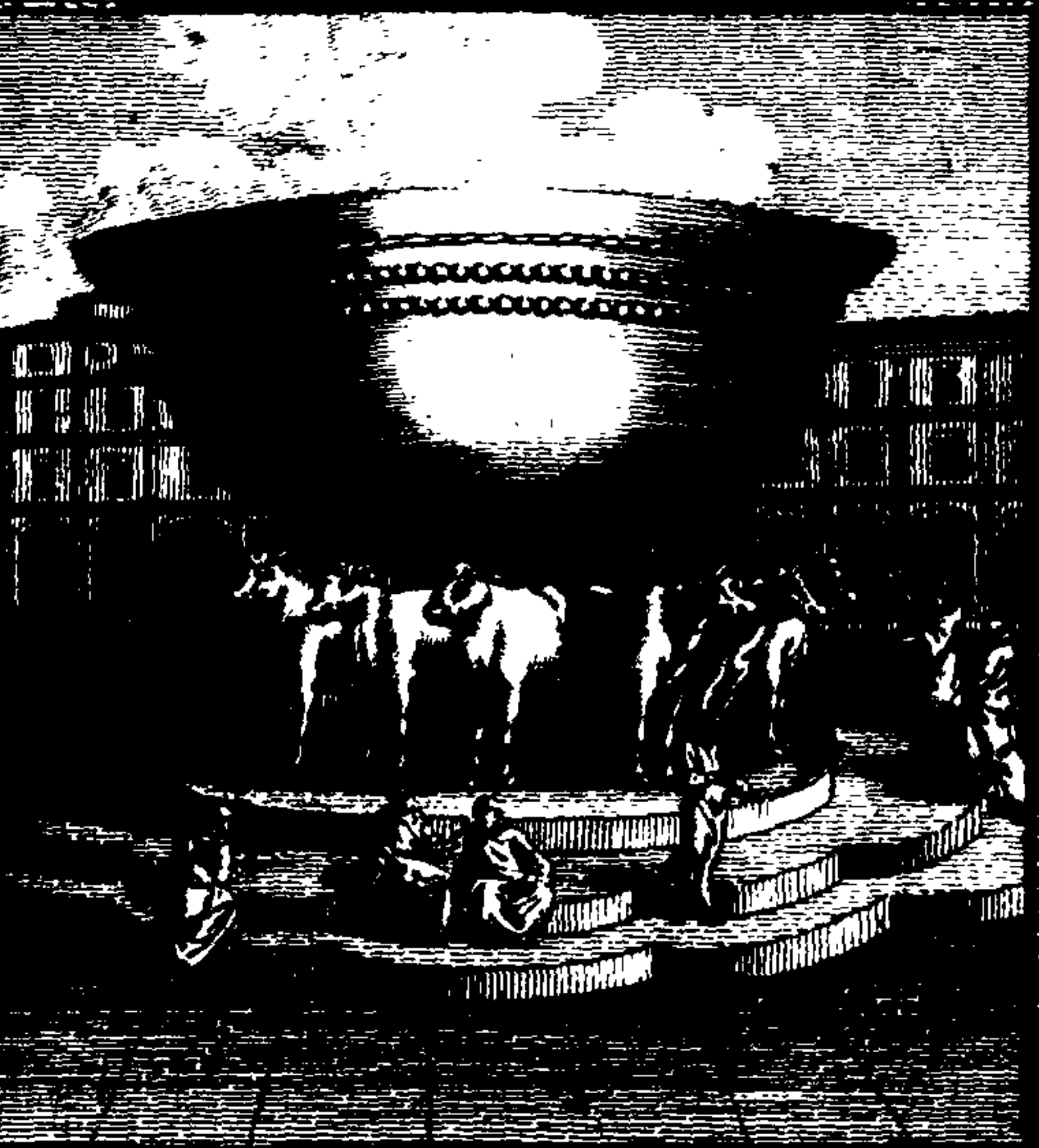
The Sacred Vessels &c. used in the Sacrifices.



The Beasts &c. for Sacrificing.



The Golden Candlestick.



The Brazen Sea.

Hear then, thou holiest God of Abraham, hear,
 From thine eternal mansions bend thine ear,
 Those mansions leave, and deign to' inhabit here. }
 I'm lost in thought ! can then th' immortal deign
 To dwell on earth, to dwell with mortal men ?
 Can this (built with our hands) this structure hold
 Him, from whose hands eternal world's have roll'd ?
 Yet, O descend, thou God of Abraham, hear, }
 From thine eternal mansions bend thine ear,
 And make this dwelling thy peculiar care.
 When adversaries shall each other vex,
 And mutual strifes the doubtful truth perplex ;
 When tremb'ling both approach thy awful fane,
 And both, by sacred oaths, their cause maintain :
 Then do thou hear, O God of Abraham, hear, }
 From thine eternal mansions bend thine ear,
 Judge the wrong-doer, and the guiltless clear.
 If e'er, with sins oppress'd, this guilty land
 Fall by the sword, and feel a tyrant's hand ;
 If they must drag the haughty victor's car,
 And smart beneath the iron rods of war ;
 Yet O, when they shall suppliant feel their shame,
 Fall at thine altar, and invoke thy name ;
 Then do thou hear, O God of Abraham, hear, }
 From thine eternal mansions bend thine ear,
 Forgive their trespass, and receive their pray'r.
 When heav'n withholds its seasonable rains,
 And famine dire bestrides the parched plains ;
 When round the wastes the wistful hind shall stare,
 Curse his own toils, and unsuccessful care ;
 If then repentant they approach thy shrine,
 And sadly deprecate the wrath divine :
 Then do thou hear, O God of Abraham, hear, }
 From thine eternal mansions bend thine ear,
 And bless with fruitful show'rs the teeming year.
 When foreign men from distant nations come,
 And gazing enter this imperial doom,
 When o'er thine altars Gentile hands they raise,
 And, in a tongue unknown, exult thy praise ;
 Then do thou hear, O God of Abraham, hear, }
 From thine eternal mansions bend thine ear,
 And let e'en distant lands thy blessing share.
 When Israel's sons an hostile act design,
 And great in arms their crested warriors shine ;
 If unto thee, the Lord of Hosts, they pray,
 And from thy hands expect the doubtful day ;
 Then do thou hear, O God of Abraham, hear, }
 From thine eternal mansions bend thine ear,
 Go with their armies—lead their hosts to war.
 But if thy sacred justice hath decreed,
 That, for their sins, the stubborn ones shall bleed :
 If captives they must visit foreign lands,
 And tread, with toilsome steps, on barb'rous sands ;
 Yet then, if then they look with longing eyes,
 Back on thy temple, and their native skies,
 Hear them e'en then, O God of Abraham, hear, }
 From thine eternal mansions bend thine ear,
 And smile propitious on thy suppliants there.
 Then let thy pow'r, and out-stretch'd arm restore,
 The wretched exiles to their native shore ;
 As erst of old, thy wonder-working hand
 O'er sands and seas led forth the chosen band, }
 From Goshen's plains, and Egypt's swarthy land.

Solomon, having finished this solemn address to God, arose, and, turning himself to the people, with his hands spread, spoke to them as follows : “ Blessed be the Lord that hath given
 “ rest unto his people Israel, according to all
 “ that he promised : there hath not failed one
 “ word of all his good promise, which he promised by the mouth of Moses his servant.
 “ The Lord our God be with us, as he was with
 “ our fathers : let him not leave us, nor forsake
 “ us : That he may incline our hearts unto him,
 “ to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judg-

ments, which he commanded our fathers.
 “ And let these my words wherewith I have
 “ made supplication before the Lord, be nigh
 “ unto the Lord our God day and night, that
 “ he maintain the cause of his servants, and the
 “ cause of his people Israel, at all times, as the
 “ matter shall require ; that all the people of
 “ the earth may know that the Lord is God ;
 “ and that there is none else. Let your heart,
 “ therefore, be perfect with the Lord our God,
 “ to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.”

After having thus addressed the people, Solomon again offered up a number of sacrifices, and *halloved the middle of the court that was before the House of the Lord.* The feast of the Dedication, in conjunction with that of the Tabernacles, lasted fourteen days, at the expiration of which, all things being performed with the greatest order and solemnity, Solomon dismissed the people, who returned, with hearts full of joy, to their respective habitations.

In the night of the very same day that Solomon had finished the ceremonies of dedicating the temple, God appeared to him a second time while he was asleep ; and the words he said to him were to this effect. “ That he had heard his prayers, and accepted his sacrifices : that he would preserve his temple, and make it the house of his dwelling ; that is to say, so long as he himself, and his posterity and people, should continue to walk before him, as David his father did, in pureness of heart ; promising him, upon that condition, to advance him to the highest degree of earthly bliss ; to perpetuate the throne of Israel to his family, so that there should never want a prince of that line, and of the tribe of Judah, to hold the scepter. But, on the contrary, if ever they should betray and depart from, or forget the worship they professed, and run after strange gods, they should be quite rooted out from off the face of the earth, and Israel be no longer a people ; but, after being torn to pieces, and broken with wars and other calamities at home, be forced to shift for themselves in the wide world, as vagabonds and exiles. The voice farther told him, that in case of such an apostacy his new-erected fabric should come to be sacked and burnt by the hands of barbarians, and Jerusalem itself laid in ashes by a merciless enemy ; inasmuch that people should stand amazed at the very report of such misery and distress, and wonder how it should come to pass that a people, who were but yesterday the envy of all mankind for riches, external glory and reputation, should now, all on a sudden, be sunk and lost to the last degree of wretchedness and contempt, and reduced to this despicable state too by the same hand that raised them. To which question their own guilty consciences should make this answer : *Because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them : therefore hath the Lord brought upon them all this evil.*

Solomon had a peculiar taste for building, and therefore, a short time after he had consecrated the temple, he set about erecting a magnificent